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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

THE THEME OF JEALOUSY IN ROBERT BROWNING'S WORKS

UP TO AND INCLUDING THE RING AND THE BOOK

by



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## Abstract

Robert Browning demonstrates an abiding interest in the theme of jealousy from his earliest experiments with stage drama up to and including The Ring and the Book. A study of his works indicates that Browning possessed a profound understanding of the complexity of jealousy and of the various manifestations of this passion. For example, Browning suggests through his works that jealousy is associated with other passions, that jealous individuals share common characteristics, and that the victims of jealousy often display similar reactions. In addition, the poet illustrates three types of jealousy, which can be described as jealous rivalry, jealousy in love, and jealous guarding or preservation of a possession. The fact that Browning recognized the complexity of jealousy is evident in his earliest dramas; however, not until he approached the dramatic monologue form in his plays and later devoted himself to this form almost exclusively did he actually create characters portraying the depth and intricacy of an individual afflicted with jealousy. Therefore, a chronological study of Robert Browning's treatment of the theme of jealousy, beginning with the early stage dramas and those plays that show a progression toward the dramatic monologue form, continuing with the dramatic monologues, and finally concentrating upon The Ring and the Book, traces Browning's steady development as a poet.





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## Introduction

From his earliest experiments with stage drama up to and including The Ring and the Book, Robert Browning demonstrates an abiding interest in the theme of jealousy. The fact that Browning recognized the complexity of this passion is evident in his earliest dramas; however, not until he approached the dramatic monologue form in his dramas and later devoted himself to this form almost exclusively did he actually create characters portraying the depth and intricacy of an individual afflicted with jealousy. Browning's profound understanding of this passion can be demonstrated through a comparison of the poet's interpretation of the passions commonly associated with jealousy, of the characteristics common to jealous individuals, and of the similarity in the reactions of jealous individuals with the descriptions of jealousy offered by psychologists.

Browning, for example, recognizes love, whether this be love for another person, for an object, or self-love, as the primary passion associated with jealousy. Robert Burton wrote during the seventeenth century, "No Love without a mixture of Jealousy; who's not jealous, loves not." <sup>1</sup> Modern psychologists similarly note that "jealousy always accompanies love" <sup>2</sup> and is particularly associated with self-love: "Jealous persons are self-centered, perpetually stooping down to look into themselves by a kind of self-love or narcissism...." <sup>3</sup> Because love involves the possessing





of a person, an object, or even of oneself, possessiveness is a second passion which both Browning and psychologists recognize in association with jealousy. Philip Kalavros, for example, explains, "Many times we cannot love without jealousy, for jealousy participates in all the instincts of possession." <sup>4</sup> Second only to love, hatred and wrath are the most common passions associated with jealousy, and Browning's recognition of this fact is particularly evident in his creation of Count Guido Franceschini. Burton, having a predilection for recognizing jealousy predominantly in women, states that "as Tacitus observes, the hate of a jealous woman is inseparable against such as she suspects." <sup>5</sup> Kalavros describes the destructive powers of wrath associated with jealousy when he writes that "often most jealous persons are exasperated with anger which stirs from the subconscious an uncontrollable neurotic urge of annihilation," <sup>6</sup> and the Beechers, psychologists, simply state, "A jealous person is always an angry person." <sup>7</sup>

In addition to common passions, jealous individuals also share similar characteristics. For example, associated with the passion of self-love are self-centeredness and egotism, characteristics which are prominent among Browning's jealous individuals in the dramas, in the dramatic monologues, and in The Ring and the Book. The Beechers note that "the goal of the jealous person is to be the preferred and only one."<sup>8</sup> The desire to be "the preferred and only one" is associated with a feeling of being neglected, and thus self-pity is a third characteristic of jealous individuals: Self-pity strips him [the jealous person] of contentment.... He is





conscious only of the gnawing pain of his jealous frustration. ... The story of self-pity is written on his face." <sup>9</sup> Finally, a feeling of inferiority is common to the jealous individual, who longs for the attributes or possessions which, he believes, his rival is withholding from him: "Jealousy, being an abnormal emotion, is always to be found with subjects marred by inferiority feelings." <sup>10</sup>

The recognition that jealous characters react in a similar manner in similar situations is a third and final point of comparison between Browning's understanding of the passion of jealousy and the studies of clinical psychologists. Browning, for example, illustrates through his creations of the Duke of Ferrara and Count Guido that "the jealous one hears treason in every innocent conversation, perceives a betrayal in a smile of politeness, imagines an already consummated embrace in the exchange of social graciousness." <sup>11</sup> Evident in, for example, Count Guido, the Bishop of Saint Praxed's Church, the monk of the Spanish cloister, and the courtiers of the political dramas is the fact that the jealous person characteristically reacts with malice to the happiness and success of his rival, for "the sight of someone else being happy is painful to the jealous person, and it turns him away from ... achievement." <sup>12</sup> Because "jealousy is eminently a state of anxiety, a state of discontentment and internal tension," <sup>13</sup> the jealous person concentrates increasingly upon the actions of his rival, as does the monk of the Spanish cloister, to the point that he becomes obsessed and reacts with the ferocity of madness against his



imagined opponent. Guido, the king of "Instans Tyrannus," and Porphyria's lover are characters who illustrate Browning's understanding of jealousy as an abnormal passion which can drive its victims to acts of insanity.

In addition to recognizing the common passions, common characteristics, and similar reactions evident in jealous characters, Browning distinguishes between three different types of jealousy. First, jealous rivalry for almost any goal such as position, wealth, or personal attributes between two or among more individuals is most prevalent in Browning's works. Jealousy in love, the second type of jealousy, is distinguished from the more general jealous rivalry by the fact that two men or women are vying for the attentions of a third beloved person. The love relationship which is inevitable to jealousy in love may also exist in the third type of jealousy, jealous guarding or preservation of a possession which, according to The Oxford English Dictionary, denotes "solicitude or anxiety for the preservation or well-being of something; vigilance in guarding a possession from loss or damage." Thus, because no clearly defined boundaries exist between the three types of jealousy, Browning's characters range from those who are afflicted by one or two to all three types of jealousy.

Before considering Browning's general progression in his treatment of the theme of jealousy, one must distinguish between jealousy and envy. Although the terms are frequently used synonymously, psychologists point out that these related passions can, nevertheless, be distinguished from one another. Although





psychologists differ in their opinions on the criteria separating jealousy from envy, one can refer to Georg Simmel for a comprehensive and succinct distinction between the two passions:

Jealousy ... is determined in its inner direction and tone by the fact that a possession is withheld from us because it is held by another, and that were this to cease, it would at once become ours: the feelings of the envious man turn rather upon the possession, those of the jealous man upon the possessor. It is possible to envy a man's fame without oneself having any pretensions to fame; but one is jealous of him if one believes that one is equally or more deserving of it. What embitters and corrodes the jealous man is a kind of emotional fiction--however unjustified and senseless--that<sup>14</sup> the other has, so to speak, taken the fame away from him.

One can conclude with Simmel's statement that "it is peculiar to the man described as jealous that the subject believes he has a rightful claim to possession, whereas envy is concerned not with the right to, but simply with the desirability of, what is denied,"<sup>15</sup> Thus, whereas the envious person is aware that he does not have an exclusive right to what he desires, the jealous person desires either to retain a possession which is endangered by a rival or to attain an object or attribute which, he believes, his rival is withholding from him. Although both jealousy and envy are related to possessiveness, the former can often be the more violent and destructive passion since the jealous person psychologically corrodes not only himself, but directs his wrath against a real or imagined rival.

Although Browning does not offer, through his characters, a single definition of jealousy, he does illustrate his awareness of and progressing ability to portray the complexity of this passion through his creation of jealous individuals. A chronological study of Browning's treatment of the theme of jealousy, beginning with





the early stage dramas and those plays that show a progression toward the dramatic monologue form, continuing with the dramatic monologues, and finally concentrating upon The Ring and the Book, traces Browning's steady development as a poet. The early stage dramas, for example, illustrate Browning's awareness of the complexity of the passion; however, they do not present well-developed jealous individuals. Those dramas which incline toward the dramatic monologue form portray the theme of jealousy in much greater depth, and the dramatic monologues themselves illustrate further progression in Browning's treatment and possibly his understanding of the theme, for each jealous speaker reveals a psychological complexity which demonstrates the intricacy and depth of his nature. With the creation of Count Guido Franceschini, however, Browning exposes the complexity of the jealous individual most superbly, for not only does the jealous Guido twice present his own estimation of himself, but his nature is discussed by nine other speakers, four of whom are also jealous characters. Thus, because the twelve dramatic monologues are incorporated into a single, unified poem, The Ring and the Book represents the climax of Browning's treatment of the theme of jealousy.



## Chapter I

### The Dramas

In 1867, thirty-four years after the original publication of Pauline, Robert Browning referred to the poem as an early indication of his continuing interest in dramatic poetry:

The thing was my earliest attempt at "poetry always dramatic in principle, and so many utterances of so many imaginary persons, not mine," which I have since written according to a scheme less extravagant and scale less impracticable than were ventured upon in this crude preliminary sketch,--a sketch that, on reviewal, appears not altogether wide of some hint of the characteristic features of that particular dramatis persona it would fain have reproduced: good draughtsmanship, however, and right handling were far beyond the artist at that time.

Indeed, this interest in "poetry always dramatic in principle," as well as his early attempts at writing drama for the stage, enabled the poet to develop and perfect the dramatic monologue form. As James McCormick notes, "from 1835 to the present numerous critics have called him [Robert Browning] the great dramatic poet of his century. At the same time they have almost unanimously declared him a failure as a dramatist." <sup>2</sup>

Browning's failure to write successful stage drama can, perhaps, be attributed to compromise. Referring to Sordello, Browning wrote, "...my stress lay on the incidents in the development of a soul: little else is worth study." <sup>3</sup> Similarly, he stated that Strafford is a play "of Action in Character, rather than Character in Action."<sup>4</sup> Browning's aim in drama, therefore, was to portray character through





the dramatization of the psychological processes within an individual. William Charles Macready, however, felt "that the traditional kind of heroic action and this alone was worthy of tragedy. As a result he was well prepared to revive the old drama but not to undertake a new approach." <sup>5</sup> Consequently, Browning "had to please a popular actor who in turn had to please large audiences and who had fixed ideas about what those audiences wanted." <sup>6</sup> Donald Hair notes that "for nearly ten years Browning believed he could reconcile his interests with those of Macready, and the plays reflect his struggle to do so." <sup>7</sup>

A Blot in the 'Scutcheon, for example, is acknowledged by Browning as an attempt at compromise. Both King Victor and King Charles and The Return of the Druses had been rejected by Macready; <sup>8</sup> therefore, Browning seems to have written A Blot in the 'Scutcheon with the actor's advice in mind. In a letter to Macready, Browning wrote,

I have written a spick and span new Tragedy (a sort of compromise between my own notion and yours--as I understand it, at least) and will send it to you if you care to be bothered so far. There is action in it, drabbing, stabbing, et autres gentilleses,--who knows but the Gods may make me good even yet? <sup>9</sup>

The play represents the failure which results from compromise. The drama has action; however, the action does not serve to portray character, but rather serves as mere adherence to stage convention. Browning's main interest still seems to be the portrayal of "Action in Character" over dramatic event. Scudder explains that Browning stopped writing for the stage with Bells and Pomegranates because



his [Browning's] own genius, bent as it was upon the interpretation of spiritual phenomena, could ill brook the demands of acted drama that all this interpretation should stop with visible, intelligible, and satisfactory action capable of histrionic expression. Browning's eager penetration of the arcana of life was too absorbing to permit him to call a halt when the actor on the stage could go no farther. 10

Only when he turned from the demands of stage convention and concentrated on portraying "Action in Character" in both dramas and dramatic monologues was Browning's aim of presenting the psychological processes within a character wholly successful.

Browning's treatment of the theme of jealousy in the dramas illustrates that his portrayal of "Action in Character rather than Character in Action" is most successful in those plays which disregard stage convention and which present characters speaking in the dramatic monologue form. Such plays make more effective use of imagery and rhythm to portray the speaker's character and, consequently, the nature and intensity of his jealousy. Strafford, King Victor and King Charles, Colombe's Birthday, and Luria all present characters engaged in jealous rivalry for power. Scheming courtiers are willing to sacrifice the individual to satisfy their own jealous interests. However, in an attempt to adhere to stage convention, Browning does not successfully characterize the jealous rivals; and consequently, the theme of jealousy is not developed to the fullest extent. For example, in Othello, Shakespeare traces the effects of jealousy upon Iago, who evilly schemes to infect Othello with the same destructive disease. Through Othello's gradual submission to "the green-eyed monster which doth mock/





The meat it feeds on," <sup>11</sup> Shakespeare exposes the jealous victim's psychological complexity. In Luria, however, which superficially resembles Othello, Browning deals with the jealous Florentines collectively to create the effect of a "jealous state." Browning does not focus upon and develop the characters of individuals, but seemingly creates the supporting characters, as Honan suggests, to illustrate Luria's nobleness. <sup>12</sup>

The imagery of Luria is developed much more fully than that of the preceding political dramas; and thus, with regard to the four political plays, one can trace a definite chronological progression, parallel to the progression in character development, in Browning's use of imagery. Honan states,

In writing for the stage Browning began with an almost clean slate as far as imagery was concerned and gradually, in some measure from play to play, developed techniques in the use of imagery that were to be of enormous value in delineating characters in the dramatic monologues while enriching the very texture. <sup>13</sup>

Indeed, as Honan notes, "imagery is almost nonexistent" <sup>14</sup> in Strafford; however, the play does introduce the animal imagery which constantly recurs throughout the dramas, the dramatic monologues, and The Ring and the Book to characterize jealous individuals and so to expose the baseness of their passion. For example, referring to the jealous courtiers, Lady Carlisle warns Strafford that "A breed of silken creature lurk and thrive/ In your contempt" (Strafford II, ii, p.59). <sup>15</sup> King Victor and King Charles, published five years after Strafford, makes slightly more use of animal imagery. For example, King Victor addresses D'Ormea as "his prime



of parasites" ("King Victor" II, p.149) and Polyxena refers to the "serpent wiles" ("King Charles" I, p.158) of Victor. D'Ormea perverts the plant and flower imagery, which Browning often employs to characterize innocent victims, when he compares himself to a stunted tree ("King Charles" II, p.159). Colombe's Birthday and Luria, published two and four years, respectively, after King Victor and King Charles present more intricately developed image patterns. The former makes use of flower imagery to characterize the heroine, whereas the latter presents images of light in association with Luria. In both dramas, some animal imagery occurs in the speeches of jealous characters.

Like the political plays, A Blot in the 'Scutcheon, which presents the effects of jealous preservation of honour, relies on stage convention to the detriment of effective image patterns and of character development. Consequently, the theme of jealousy is not as fully developed as in Pippa Passes, A Soul's Tragedy, and "In a Balcony." Although these three dramas represent different stages in Browning's career, each play illustrates a marked disregard for conventional dramatic form and a movement toward the dramatic monologue, which is most conducive to Browning's purpose of character revelation. Honan remarks that "in Pippa's contribution to the dramatic monologues may lie its chief significance,"<sup>16</sup> and he sees further progression in A Soul's Tragedy, published five years after Pippa Passes: "A Soul's Tragedy differs rather surprisingly from any of the dramas or dramatic poems written before it and suggest





a new step--beyond Pippa and toward the dramatic monologues--in Browning's treatment of character." <sup>17</sup> "In a Balcony," included in Men and Women, has speeches most like the dramatic monologues in which the psychological complexities of the characters are most intricately delineated. Parallel to the more effective revelation of character, image patterns are also more fully developed, particularly in Pippa Passes and "In a Balcony," than in the four political plays and A Blot in the 'Scutcheon. Thus, a study of the dramas, beginning with the political plays and A Blot in the 'Scutcheon, progressing with Pippa Passes and A Soul's Tragedy, and ending with "In a Balcony," illustrates that the theme of jealousy is most fully developed in those dramas which illustrate a definite movement toward the dramatic monologue form.

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Although Browning wrote in the preface to Strafford, his first play, that his aim was "Action in Character," the effect is one of "Character in Action." The dramatist seems to concentrate upon the presentation of dramatic event rather than upon the creation of character. Honan explains that the absence of well-developed characters results from Browning's unconscious compromise:

Filled with the details of Strafford's life, then, and well aware that his first stage play would have to satisfy the theatrical standards of a man like Macready, Browning in part unconsciously abandoned the concentration upon character portrayal that had been the radical feature of Paracelsus and the central doctrine of his dramatic theory until this time. <sup>18</sup>

Consequently, not even the character of Strafford is fully developed. Although the action is internalized through Strafford's, and even



Pym's, inner conflict and the psychological processes of Strafford are portrayed in his fragmentary speeches, the struggle of the main character is not quite clear. For example, Strafford dedicates his life to an ideal represented by King Charles; however, at times his devotion is directed explicitly toward King Charles the man.

Strafford is quite aware of Charles' attitude toward him, for in reply to Lady Carlisle's statement, "Charles never loved you," he says, "And he never will./ He's not one of those who care the more for men/ That they're unfortunate" (II, ii, p.59). Strafford is even conscious of Charles' duplicity and selfishness; nevertheless, he retains his inexplicable trust and love for the King.

The King and the courtiers do not become real characters. Instead, they symbolize jealous rivalry for power. As in Luria, the supporting characters of Strafford emphasize the nobleness of the main character, but they do not reveal their own natures. Consequently, their jealousy is suggested only by their actions and by what other characters say about them. In the first scene of the drama, for example, the younger Vane blames Strafford for the King's jealous grasping for power:

That man has set himself to one dear task,  
The bringing Charles to relish more and more  
Power, power without law, power and blood too  
--Can I be still? (I, i, p.50)

Later, in his meeting with Charles, Strafford realizes and admits that he is an expendable instrument in Charles' quest for power:

Do you know, sir, I think within my heart,  
That you would say I did advise the war;  
And if, through your own weakness, or, what's worse,  
These Scots, with God to help them, drive me back,





You will not step between the raging People  
And me, to say...

I knew it! from the first  
I knew it! Never was so cold a heart! (II, ii, p.58)

Finally, in the fourth act, the King jealously preserves his own position by failing to prove Strafford's innocence of the charges made against him and by signing the warrant for Strafford's death.

The courtiers, jealous of Strafford's influence upon the King, attempt to destroy him. During their first meeting in the drama, Lady Carlisle warns Strafford to beware of the scheming courtiers:

Oh, there's no charge, no precise charge;  
Only they sneer, make light of--one may say,  
Nibble at what you do. (I, ii, p.53)

Later, in an attempt to dissuade Strafford from engaging in war with the Scots, Lady Carlisle again reveals the malign jealousy of the King's advisers:

Strafford,

The wind that saps these walls can undermine  
Your camp in Scotland, too. Whence creeps the wind?  
Have you no eyes except for Pym? Look here!  
A breed of silken creatures lurk and thrive  
In your contempt. You'll vanquish Pym? Old Vane  
Can vanquish you. And Vane you think to fly?  
Rush on the Scots! Do nobly! Vane's slight sneer  
Shall test success, adjust the praise, suggest  
The faint result: Vane's sneer shall reach you there.  
(II, ii, p.59)

As Hollis reveals to Charles, Vane does, indeed, vanquish Strafford by accusing him of desiring war with Scotland. Although Strafford's death is directly caused by Vane's jealousy of his rival's influential position, the execution could have been averted by Charles. However, the King's jealous desire to preserve his own power prevents him from admitting his guilt in persuading Strafford to attack Scotland.



King Victor in Browning's third drama, King Victor and King Charles, is much like King Charles in Strafford. His jealousy also enables him to sacrifice an individual to preserve his own reputation and power. D'Ormea first reports that "Savoy's become a mass of misery/ And wrath, which one man has to meet--the King" ("King Victor," Part I, p.147), and King Victor himself admits to his declining power: "Allies? I've broken faith with Venice, Holland, England" ("King Victor," Part II, p.149). In an attempt to elude his problems and, as he suggests, jealously to preserve his career, the old King resolves to abdicate in favour of his son. Thus, the jealous King's scheme becomes evident as he says to D'Ormea,

My career's not closed as yet,  
This boy was ever subject to my will,  
Timid and tame--the fitter! ("King Victor," Part II, p.149)

As in Strafford, the King's jealous nature is revealed not only by his actions, but also by the comments of other characters. For example, King Victor sets "the cunning trap" (p.151) and gives his son a false reason for the abdication:

Confess with me, at four-and-sixty years  
A crown's a load. I covet quiet once  
Before I die, and summoned you for that.  
("King Victor," Part II, p.150)

Charles reacts with suspicion and thus reveals that, to retain his crown, the King has often humiliated his son:

My life has passed  
Under your eye, tormented as you know,--  
Your whole sagacities, one after one,  
At leisure brought to play on me--to prove me  
A fool, I thought and I submitted; now  
You'd prove...what would you prove me?  
("King Victor," Part II, p.150)









And let things right themselves, the masque unmasque  
Of the old King, crownless, grey hair and hot blood.  
("King Charles," Part I, p.156)

Later, in demanding the crown, Victor suggests that he is not only jealous of his son's position, but also of his success. As he orders, "Or I'll not ask who's King, but simply, who/ Withholds the crown I claim? Deliver it!", his speech portrays a sense of failure, characteristic of a jealous person, for he continues,

I have no friends in the wide world: nor France  
Nor England cares for me: you see the sum  
Of what I can avail. ("King Charles," Part II, p.162)

As Charles crowns Victor, the old man reveals how much he venerates the position which he has so jealously guarded:

I am then King! As I became a King  
Despite the nations, kept myself a King,  
So I die King, with Kingship dying too  
Around me! I have lasted Europe's time!  
("King Charles," Part II, p.162)

Thus, he dies as King but dies defeated by his son.

James McCormick states that King Victor and King Charles " was a second attempt both to experiment with an historical subject and to reconcile this with the theater of the day." <sup>19</sup> As in Strafford, Browning stresses in the preface the psychological complexities of his characters, which are more effectively created than those of his first drama. The play does not have the abundant action of Strafford; therefore, more attention is directed toward character development. Browning's disregard for the traditional five-act structure illustrates further movement away from stage convention; however, the drama was still written to be performed. Consequently, Browning's attempt to conform to theater convention again results



in character portraits which are not wholly effective. For example, stripped of his royal mask, King Victor begins to reveal himself at the end of the drama; but at the beginning, he is merely portrayed as a self-centered, scheming monarch who does not display his real emotions. Park Honan explains that "in the later dramas, particularly in those not written for the stage, character is delineated without the benefit of a striking action--but Browning's blank verse at the time of King Victor is not supple and skilled enough to do this."<sup>20</sup>

Colombe's Birthday and Luria, unlike Strafford and King Victor and King Charles, were both written after the publication of many of Browning's dramatic monologues. Colombe's Birthday is the last play which Browning wrote for the stage,<sup>21</sup> and Luria is dedicated to Landor as the "last attempt for the present at dramatic poetry."<sup>22</sup> Like Strafford, Colombe's Birthday and Luria portray courtiers engaged in jealous rivalry for their own political advancement. However, as in Strafford, no study of the nature of their jealousy is made. Again, jealousy is pictured in the actions of the rivals, but no character reveals the psychological complexity which is essential to the study of the jealous individual.

The first act of Colombe's Birthday presents the courtiers engaged in mild dispute. None is willing to inform Colombe of Prince Berthold's impending arrival to claim her duchy and, consequently, each reveals his jealous concern for his own position at court. Guibert, for example, is quite aware that the other courtiers have long sought his position:





Then, gentles, who'll accept a certain poor  
 Indifferently honorable place,  
 My friends, I make no doubt, have gnashed their teeth  
 At leisure minutes these half-dozen years,  
 To find me never in the mood to quit? (I, p.231)

Guibert also states the lesson for court novices as he replies to  
 Gaucelme,

What lesson sir?  
 That everybody, if he'd thrive at court,  
 Should, first and last of all, look to himself? (I, p.231)

Typifying the jealous person, each of the self-centered courtiers  
 shows that he has mastered this lesson. Guibert quickly agrees  
 with Valence: "Little at court, as your quick instinct prompts,/ Do  
 such as we without a recompense" (I, p.234). Maufroy admits to  
 his ambitions when he remarks, "I hope to climb a little in the  
 world,--/ I'd push my fortunes...." (I, p.231); and he recognizes  
 similar aspirations in Clugnet: "Sir Clugnet,/ You famish for  
 promotion" (I, p.231). True to Maufroy's estimation, Clugnet thinks  
 only of his personal benefit in deciding whether or not he will give  
 Prince Berthold's letter to Colombe:

To give this letter were a sort, I take it,  
 Of service: services ask recompense:  
 What kind of corner may be Ravestein? (I, p.231)

Gaucelme is also implicated by his rivals as a ruthless, self-  
 seeking courtier:

You, Gaucelme, won't lose character, beside--  
 You broke your father's heart superiorly  
 To gather his succession--never blush! (I, p.232)

Characteristically, the courtiers make Valence their instrument  
 by granting him an audience with Colombe in return for his delivering  
 to her Berthold's letter. After he has been made Colombe's only



adviser, Valence becomes the object of the courtiers' jealousy.

Like the courtiers of Strafford, they seek to destroy him and consequently conjure what they believe is a counter-scheme against "this plan he [Berthold] helps,/ For Valence's ennoblement" (IV, p.243).

Thus, the Prince's initial estimation of the courtiers proves quite correct:

Since, as I live, I took you as you entered  
For just so many dearest friends of mine,  
Fled from the sinking to the rising power  
--The sneaking'st crew, in short, I e'er despised!  
(III, p.240)

Colombe also realizes that the courtiers, in whom she placed her trust in the beginning of the play, "hate and would degrade" (V, p.249) Valence. Consequently, extreme jealousy causes a destructive impulse in its victims.

Valence, unlike the courtiers, remains completely unaffected by jealousy. Throughout the drama, his only aim is to redress the wrongs suffered by the people of Cleves. He never misuses his position as Colombe's counsellor for his own ends. For example, he determines to decide impartially the validity of the Prince's claim to the duchy:

Can I decide against myself--pronounce  
She is the Duchess and no mate for me?  
--Cleves, help me! Teach me,--every haggard face,--  
To sorrow and endure! I will do right  
Whatever be the issue. Help me, Cleves! (III, p.242)

Later, when Valence and the Prince both believe that Colombe has chosen to marry the latter, Valence does not fall into a jealous rage, but rather proves how genuine is his love for Colombe. Feeling ample gratification in the memory of Colombe, he refuses any offer of an





influential position at the court:

Who thought upon reward? And yet how much  
Comes after--oh, what amplest recompense!  
Is the knowledge of her, naught? the memory, naught?  
--Lady, should such an one have looked on you,  
Ne'er wrong yourself so far as quote the world  
And say, love can go unrequited here!  
You will have blessed him to his whole life's end--  
Low passions hindered, baser cares kept back,  
All goodness cherished where you dwelt--and dwell. (V, p.250)

Similarly, when Colombe and Prince Berthold state that "he shall have whate'er he asks" (V, p.250), Valence again rejects personal desire for the good of his people. His aside reveals his intense love for Colombe, but he finally pleads for the people of Cleves:

If I should ask--  
The withered bunch of flowers she wears--perhaps,  
One last touch of her hand, I never more  
Shall see!

...  
Cleves' Prince, redress the wrongs of Cleves! (V, p.250)

Although the theme of jealousy is only partially developed through the rivalling courtiers, who do not emerge as complex individuals, the play does illustrate a progression beyond Strafford and King Victor and King Charles in character development. Honan says of Colombe's Birthday "that it is the only stage play that fairly bears out the implications of the poet's dramatic theory: it is a fine example of action in character rather than character in action." <sup>23</sup> Indeed, the characters of Colombe, Prince Berthold, and Valence are subtly developed and revealed through their own speeches.

Imagery aids in character revelation, and of particular significance is the flower imagery which is associated with Colombe.



As Honan notes, "Flowers are used in at least four different ways to tell something about the Duchess: her purity, her youth, her vulnerability, and finally her modesty."<sup>24</sup> Almost everyone in the play, including Colombe, associates the Duchess with flowers. For example, reprimanding the courtiers, Colombe pictures her own innocence by comparing herself to church-flowers:

I gave myself  
No more a title to your homage, no,  
Than church-flowers, born this season, wrote the words  
In the saint's-book that sanctified them first.  
For such a flower, you plucked me; well, you erred--  
(II, pp.236-237)

Addressing Prince Berthold, Valence mentions lilies as a symbol of Cleves' loyalty:

Can you become our Colombe, our play-queen,  
For whom, to furnish lilies for her hair,  
We'd pour our veins forth to enrich the soil!  
(III, p.241)

Prince Berthold refers to Colombe as "this sweet flower" (IV, p.244); and at the end of the drama, he concludes that Valence is much worthier of Colombe's love: "Too costly a flower were this, I see it now,/ To pluck and set upon my barren helm/ To wither" (V, p.250). Even the jealous courtiers recognize an association between flower images and Colombe's innocence, for Guibert states that at Ravestein "she lived queen/ Over the water-buds" (I, p.231) and later notes that the old Duke "hid his child/ Among the river-flowers at Ravestein" (I, p.232).

As with flower images, Browning also presents harmless animals as symbols of innocent characters. Colombe, for example, states, "I followed the bird's flight/ Or plucked the flower" (III, p.240),



and Gaucelme represents the Duchess' followers as swallows which will flee when the Prince, the "snow-goose" (I, p.232), assumes power. A much more cruel picture of Colombe's subjects, however, is presented, also through animal images, by Guibert:

So tender they their love; and, tender made,  
Go home to curse us, the first doit we ask.  
As if their souls were any longer theirs!  
As if they had not given ample warrant  
To who should clap a collar on their neck,  
Rings in their nose, a goad to either flank,  
And take them for the brute they boast themselves!  
(I, p.233)

Such application of animal images to others typifies the jealous courtiers and thus reflects their own base natures. The actions which they attribute to others are those in which they themselves would engage in their jealous quest for power and rank. For example, Gaucelme ironically reverses the images when he states that the courtiers are "sheep-like" in assisting Colombe and Valence, who are "worming on their way by craft" (IV, p.243). However, realizing that Colombe's confidence in the courtiers can never be restored, he pays tribute to the Duchess' noble nature, from which he dissociates himself by illustrating his familiarity with baser natures:

Never in noble natures! With the base ones,--  
Twist off the crab's claw, wait a smarting-while,  
And something grows and grows and gets to be  
A mimic of the lost joint, just so like  
As keeps in mind it never, never will  
Replace its predecessor! Crabs do that:  
But lop the lion's foot--and.... (IV, p.243)

The jealous Florentines in Luria also apply animal imagery to their imagined opponent who, they believe, is acting upon instinct. However, like the courtiers of Colombe's Birthday, the Florentines





reveal their own ignoble natures through their use of animal imagery and are characterized, in turn, by Husain as "hating people, that hate each the other/.../ Locked each to each like slippery snakes" (II, p.304). Braccio, for example, determines that Luria's career must end because "Brute-force shall not rule Florence!" (I, p.301). Both Luria and Husain are aware of the Florentine attitude, which is reflected in Husain's statement to Luria: "Why, a very beast thou art!" (IV, p.311). Similarly, Luria confronts Braccio asking, "Am I the baited animal that must turn/ And fight his baiters to deserve their praise?" (III, p.308) and later questions Florence, "You will prove the brute nature?" (III, p.309). However, contrary to what the Florentines wish to believe, Luria is guided by his heart, which responds to a higher, idealized concept of Florentine civilization. Guided by his ideal, Luria is associated with light imagery. He reveals the ironic juxtaposition of light and animal imagery which permeates the drama when he affirms that he is not guided by animal instinct but is inspired by a noble vision:

Yes--when the desert creature's heart, at fault  
Amid the scattering tempest's pillared sands,  
Betrays its step into the pathless drift--  
The calm instructed eye of man holds fast  
By the sole bearing of the visible star. (II, p.305)

After Luria learns that he has been betrayed, he refers frequently to the light which guides him. For example, he explains, "The sun that guides is closer to us [the Moors]" (IV, p.312); and before he drinks the poison, he looks forward to "Another morning from my East" and to "the new sun" (IV, p.312) which symbolizes his sacrifice for Florence.



As the light imagery illustrates, Luria, like Valence and Strafford, demonstrates a complete disregard for personal advancement and total commitment to an ideal. Through his unselfish devotion to Florence, Luria becomes, as Donald Hair suggests, a Christ figure: "Luria's entire life is devoted to saving Florence, and therefore, metaphorically, to saving mankind. The fact that he is ready to die for Florence (and in fact does so) strengthens the Christian overtones." <sup>25</sup> Jacopo, the secretary, aptly pictures Luria's devotion when he says, "That man believes in Florence, as the saint/ Tied to the wheel believes in God" (I, p.300). Even Braccio agrees, for he replies, "How strange!/ You too have thought that!" (I, p.300). Luria describes his own devotion as he discounts Tiburzio's warning:

Sir, I am nearer Florence than her sons.  
I can, and have perhaps obliged the State,  
Nor paid a mere son's duty. (II, p.304)

Finally, at the end of the drama, after realizing that he has been the instrument of the Florentines and that "at the last must figure Luria, then!" (IV, p.312), Luria does not take revenge, but sacrifices himself to shield Florence from harm.

In Luria, to a greater extent than in Colombe's Birthday, Browning concentrates almost exclusively upon the character of the protagonist. Honan interprets this concentration as

evidence of Browning's dedication to the monologue form--in its [Luria's] unusual dramatic emphasis upon one character, in the near-evaporation of its supporting cast, and in the fact that most of Luria's long speeches are concerned with innermost feelings and thoughts and less with a tragic action that only very slowly and incidentally unfolds in the play. <sup>26</sup>

The secondary characters remain shadowy and, consequently, the theme





of jealousy can be traced only through the schemes of the Florentines. Again, none of the jealous individuals emerges as a complex character who reveals his motives and the effects of jealousy upon himself.

Feeling remorse for having employed Luria as an instrument of her vengeance, Domizia pictures the extreme envy or jealousy of the Florentines:

Such plague possessed this Florence: who can tell  
The mighty girth and greatness at the heart  
Of those so perfect pillars of the grove  
She pulled down in her envy? (IV, pp.311-312)

The first scene of the drama presents Braccio's scheming to provide evidence for Luria's trial. His generalization, which perhaps best applies to him and to the Florentine officials conducting the trial, aptly characterizes the selfish and jealous individual: "Man seeks his own good at the whole world's cost." (I, p.300). However, Braccio applies the generalization to Luria and so reveals that he and the officials are both jealous and afraid of the Moor's success. He fears that, like the Florentines, Luria will continue to maintain his ruling position after peace has been made and that ambition will corrupt his rule:

Can I suppose an utter alien here,  
This Luria, our inevitable foe,  
Confessed a mercenary and a Moor,  
Born free from many ties that bind the rest  
Of common faith in Heaven or hope on earth,  
No past with us, no future,--such a spirit  
Shall hold the path from which our stanchest broke,  
Stand firm where very famed precursor fell? (I, p.300)

Both Husain and Tiburzio are aware of the Florentines' jealousy, and both warn Luria. Tiburzio portends Luria's fate when he states, "Brief, they are Florentines! You, saving them,/ Seek the sure destruction saviors find." (II, p.304); and Husain pictures the



jealous rivalry of the Florentines:

This hating people, that hate each the other,  
And in one blandness to us Moors unite--  
Locked each to each like slippery snakes, I say,  
...  
See thou, if Puccio come not safely out  
Of Braccio's grasp, this Braccio sworn his foe--  
As Braccio safely from Domizia's toils  
Who hates him most! But thou, the friend of all,  
...Come out of them! (II, p.304)

Puccio has a more substantial reason for his jealousy, because his position as Florentine commander was granted to Luria. Nevertheless, he is not aware that he is an accomplice to Braccio's sinister schemes, for he later asks,

What is "trial," sir?  
It was not for a trial,--surely, no--  
I furnished you those notes from time to time? (III, p.307)

Puccio also shows, perhaps, the greatest change in attitude at the end of the drama. During his first appearance, he betrays his jealousy when he says, referring to Florence's choosing Luria, "As if zeal, courage, prudence, conduct, faith,/ Had never met in any man before" (I, p.299). After Braccio's scheme has been revealed, Puccio admits to his jealousy:

I have gone on, persuaded I was wronged,  
Slighted, insulted, terms we learn by rote,--  
All because Luria superseded me--  
Because the better nature, fresh-inspired,  
Mounted above me to its proper place!  
What mattered all the kindly graciousness,  
The cordial brother's-bearing? This was clear--  
I, once the captain, now was subaltern,  
And so must keep complaining like a fool! (IV, p.310)

This quotation clearly illustrates that Puccio has overcome his jealousy and feels only respect and admiration for Luria. The last act of the drama confirms this change in attitude when Puccio declares to Luria, "To exile or to death I follow you!" (V, p.314) and reaffirms,



Then, not for fifty hundred Florences  
 Would I accept one office save my own,  
 Fill any other than my rightful post  
 Here at your feet, my captain and my lord! (V, p.313)

Unlike the four political dramas, A Blot in the 'Scutcheon does not present jealous rivalry, but illustrates the effects of Earl Tresham's jealous preservation of honour. Except for Guendolen, the major characters of this drama, which Browning admitted is a compromise between his "notion" and Macready's insistence upon action, are not real and convincing, because their actions are too rigidly controlled by a severe adherence to a moral code of conduct. Although Mertoun occasionally describes Mildred in terms of flower imagery, no consistent image patterns exist to aid in the development of the major characters. A Blot in the 'Scutcheon was published after the Dramatic Lyrics, which contained some dramatic monologues; however, the blank verse "seems to reveal less progress in the direction of Browning's mature technique than does that of any other stage play he wrote." <sup>27</sup> McCormick cites a reason for the drama's regression from the dramatic monologue form:

The best place to learn how completely Browning had turned to the necessities of the commercial theater of his day is in A Blot in the 'Scutcheon. This is a full dress tragedy with "silk and silver varlets" in the romanticized Shakespearian tradition. It has most of the popular tricks that should have made it a successful melodrama. <sup>28</sup>

As in the political plays, therefore, jealousy can be discerned through the actions and speeches of the characters, but they do not reveal the reasons for their intense attempt to preserve family pride and honour.





Earl Tresham imposes the ancestral pride and honour, which must be upheld by a rigid moral code, upon the family. His jealousy to preserve the honour of his lineage and to prevent "a blot in the 'scutcheon" is evident throughout the play. In accordance with his aim, Earl Tresham appears grave and lofty to his retainers (I, i, p.217); however, he is not the cold and haughty man whom Mertoun fears during his first meeting with the Earl. During this meeting, Tresham characteristically pays deference to Mertoun's name, "noble among the noblest in itself" (I, i, p.217). Later, when he has learned of Mildred's "sin," Tresham shows the same reverence for his own name, for his greatest concern is with the dishonour to be suffered by himself and by his ancestors:

And what will now  
 Become of me? I'll hide your shame and mine  
 From every eye; the dead must heave their hearts  
 Under the marble of our chapel-floor;  
 They cannot rise and blast you. You may wed  
 Your paramour above our mother's tomb;  
 Our mother cannot move from 'neath your foot. (II, p.224)

In the last act, as Tresham wanders around his estate, he again demonstrates his obsessive concern with family honour. He does not refer compassionately to Mildred as his sister, but rather as a "horrid progeny" springing "from a line like ours" (III, i, p.226). Although his jealous guarding of his honour has caused the deaths of Mildred and Mertoun, the dying Tresham is still concerned with his lineage as he addresses Guendolen and Austin: "...name/ And fame are yours: you hold our 'scutcheon up./ Austin, no blot on it!" (III, ii, p.230).

Donald Hair asserts that Guendolen and Austin "represent the



norm of conduct and attitude in the play. Though they never disparage family honour, they regard it with some sense of humour." <sup>29</sup> Indeed, Guendolen, more than Austin, is quick to point out Earl Tresham's jealous obsession with his honour. She admires Tresham as "the perfect spirit of honor," but she also warns against over-emphasizing his honourable lineage: "But he should take men's homage, trust in it,/ And care no more about what drew it down" (I, iii, p.219). She humourously admonishes the Earl by stating that Mertoun should have pleaded with her saying,

Sweet lady,  
Your cousin there will do me detriment  
He little dreams of: he's absorbed, I see,  
In my old name and fame--be sure he'll leave  
My Mildred, when his best account of me  
Is ended, in full confidence I wear  
My grandsire's periwig down either cheek. (I, ii, p.219)

After Tresham has spoken with Gerard, Guendolen senses that the Earl is not well and, with humour, unwittingly and ironically cites the cause of the Earl's apparent distress: "I'll die/ Piecemeal, record that, if there have not gloomed/ Some blot i' the 'scutcheon!" (II, p.223).

Guendolen judges the individual by his character and not by his adherence to a moral code or by his honourable lineage. She intuitively understands that Mertoun is Mildred's lover and readily pronounces Mildred "free from all that heap/ Of sins which else had been irredeemable" (II, p.226). Mildred, however, "is carried off by her emotions, unable to sustain the conflict between the 'pure' (her rigid sense of morality) and the 'passionate' (her love for Mertoun)." <sup>30</sup> Mildred, like Tresham, stresses the importance of honour. Because she has sinned against





the moral code, Mildred feels extreme and unreasonable guilt. For example, after she learns that Tresham has consented to her marriage, Mildred expresses her fatalistic attitude to Mertoun:

Utter to your soul, what mine  
 Long since, Beloved, has grown used to hear,  
 Like a death-knell, so much regarded once,  
 And so familiar now; this will not be! (I, iii, p.220)

She reasserts, "Sin has surprised us, so will punishment." (I, iii, p.220) and states that she will "pour forth all our woeful story,/ The love, the shame, and the despair" with her family standing "round me aghast as round some cursed fount/ That should spirt water, and spouts blood" (I, iii, p.221). Tresham does react as she predicts and, in his jealous rage, kills not only Mertoun and, indirectly, Mildred, but also himself after he recognizes the purity and validity of the love. Roma A. King states that "Mertoun and Mildred talk about 'sin' and 'punishment', but clearly their error is more imagined than real, their punishment more the reflexes of convention than judgment of universal moral law."<sup>31</sup> By illustrating the effects of the Earl's jealous preservation of honour, Browning questions the value of conventional morality as the final judge of man's conduct.

Jealous rivalry, evident in the political plays, and jealous preservation, illustrated in A Blot in the 'Scutcheon, are both presented in Pippa Passes. Although Pippa Passes was written early in Browning's career and was the second drama to be published, critics acclaim its excellence. Arthur E. DuBois, for example, states that Pippa Passes is "the most original and forward-looking play written since Sheridan."<sup>32</sup> The drama's excellence may be attributed to



Browning's disregard for stage convention and, as DeVane notes, his "moving towards the dramatic monologue as he learns to project his insights outward and portray imaginary characters under the stress of psychological conflicts." <sup>33</sup> Park Honan even cites a parallel between Jules' turning from sculpting to painting and Browning's turning from traditional dramatic form:

In 1839, it would seem, not abandoning the stage play, the form that was so vital to the development of his blank-verse technique, Browning at the same time took a radical step to liberate himself from what he felt to be the tyranny of a traditional form that could at best only lead him into the creation of fatally expert, self-debilitating limitations. The metaphor is perhaps not too strong: in Pippa Passes he began to paint. <sup>34</sup>

Continuing to explain his metaphor, Honan indicates that he is in agreement with DeVane, for he says that with Pippa Passes Browning begins "to write less inhibitedly for the benefit of a more intimate and inevitably more discerning audience--the individual reader--and so to extend his mastery of character-revealing techniques and to move in the direction of the dramatic monologue." <sup>35</sup>

Indeed, the characters of Pippa Passes are delineated through their own self-revealing speeches made effective by the use of subtle imagery, changing rhythms, and individualized diction and syntax. Even the character of Pippa, which, as pointed out by both Margaret Glen and Dale Kramer, has been traditionally regarded as superficially developed, is psychologically complex. Margaret Glen notes,

She [Pippa] is far too often treated more as a fairy than as a human being, because of an undue emphasis upon her lyric outbursts. But her real humanity, as well as her complexity, becomes apparent in her first speech and more especially in her last. <sup>36</sup>



Kramer concentrates upon Pippa's introductory dramatic monologue and states that, "with character traits beyond the simplicity of naiveté and faith, she [Pippa] is not entirely what the critics have assumed." <sup>37</sup> Kramer indicates in his article that Pippa, although she asserts, "I will pass each, and see their happiness,/ And envy none" ("Introduction" p.320), <sup>38</sup> envies "Asolo's Four Happiest Ones" "because this one day is so important to her, though they would feel no loss if it were a rainy or stormy day." <sup>39</sup> He continues, saying that "the nature of her [Pippa's] remarks concerning all of the Happiest Four connotes a definite envy," <sup>40</sup> and he describes Pippa as "innocent but deliberately self-centered," <sup>41</sup> a characteristic of the jealous individual. Pippa's envy, however, is not passionate enough to be termed jealousy. After discussing Pippa's introductory monologue, Kramer establishes that Pippa Passes "illustrates aspects of selfishness, or self-love," <sup>42</sup> and, indeed, Ottima and the students of the Jules-Phene episode indicate a self-concern which exceeds selfishness and can be interpreted as jealousy. Ottima demonstrates a jealous desire for preservation in her passionate love for Sebald, and the students, like the courtiers of the political plays, illustrate the jealous rivalry among the artists.

Although very few speeches are assigned to the students, they reveal their characters and their jealousy more fully than do the courtiers in the political dramas. For example, after studying the Second Student's first and only substantial speech, Park Honan concludes:





The character of the Second Student that emerges is simple but clear in its constituents: he is a witty young man wholly preoccupied with his own verbal invention, and so high-spirited that he cannot stay on one theme for long--he explodes ("His own fault, the simpleton!"), he switches from one conceit to another, he bursts into witty doggerel--possibly supplied to him by Bluphocks. The vitality and spontaneity of the passage are evident; it is a successful prose portrait of its speaker. <sup>43</sup>

The portrait of the First Student, who calls himself Lutwyche and proclaims himself "spokesman" (p.330) for the group, is even more revealing, for he expresses the passions which are supposedly harboured by all of the students. Like the courtiers of the political dramas, he uses animal images, which reveal his own ignoble jealous nature. For example, whereas Jules later finds artistic inspiration through Phene, the first student notes that her name is "by translation, sea-eagle" (p.332) and pictures her, through simile, as a "noisome fly":

'To hold Jules long in doubt, yet take his taste  
'And lure him on until, at innermost  
'Where he seeks sweetness' soul, he may find--this!  
'--As in the apple's core, the noisome fly:  
'For insects on the rind are seen at once,  
'And brushed aside as soon, but this is found  
'Only when on the lips or loathing tongue.'  
(11.169-175, pp.337-338)

The First Student is enraged that Jules has described the artists as brutalized" (p.330); however, whether consciously or unconsciously, Lutwyche also applies this metaphor to himself and to his friends: "Now, think of Jules finding himself distinguished from the herd of us by such a creature!" (Part I, p.332).

The reason for the students' "friendly vengeance on Jules" (Part I, p.330) is soon revealed as the First Student states that "each professes himself alike insulted by this strutting stone



squarer" and then indicates that the students, with "hateful smirk of boundless self-conceit" (Part I, p.337), are jealous of Jules' real or imagined superiority: "He, forsooth, take up his portion with these dissolute, brutalized, heartless bunglers!--so he was heard to call us all..." (Part I, p.330). The fact that the students are seeking vengeance not only for Jules' attitude toward them, but also for his dedication to his own work, is later revealed by the First Student:

Next he [Jules] posts himself deliberately before the unfinished Pieta for half an hour without moving, till up he starts of a sudden, and thrusts his very nose into--I say, into--the group; by which gesture you are informed that precisely the sole point he had not fully mastered in Canova's practice was a certain method of using the drill in the articulation of the knee-joint--and that, likewise, has he mastered at length! Good-bye, therefore, to poor Canova--whose gallery no longer needs detain his successor Jules, the predestinated novel thinker in marble! (Part II, p.331)

By deceitfully encouraging Jules' marriage to Phene, the students believe that they will lower Jules' stature and so obliterate him as a rival.

Although the tone of their banter is light, the students reveal the intensity of their jealousy through their derogatory remarks and their cruel scheme. Their hatred for Jules is certainly suggested and later confirmed as Phene recites the poem given to her by Lutwyche:

And how, having hated thee,  
I sought long and painfully  
To reach thy heart, nor prick  
The skin but pierce to the quick--  
Ask this, my Jules, and be answered straight  
By thy bride--how the painter Lutwyche can hate! (Part II, p.339)





Ottima's jealousy in Part I of Pippa Passes is equally intense; however, she is not jealous of a rival. Instead, she displays a jealous desire to preserve her passionate love, as does Earl Tresham to preserve his honour. Throughout the scene, Ottima's domination over Sebald, both in the past and in the present, is evident. For example, referring to the past, she says that she, and not Sebald, schemed "to get him [Luca] from the fire" (Part I, 1.75, p.323) and, addressing Sebald, notes that "I ventured to receive you here,/ Made you steal hither in the mornings" (Part I, 11.175-176, p.323). Sebald also blames her for her dominant role because she, and not he, aroused Luca's anger: "He [Luca] sat by us at table quietly:/ Why must you lean across till our cheeks touched?" (11.149-150, p.325). At the end of the scene, Sebald unjustly places total blame for the crime on Ottima, and through her angry retaliation, during which she addresses him as "Beggar--my slave" (1.253, p.328), she again portrays her dominance in the relationship.

Ottima's domination in the scene demonstrates her jealous attempt to preserve her passionate love. Both Ottima and Sebald planned and committed Luca's murder presumably to satisfy their jealous love, and the deed is justified as "our passion's fruit" (1.53, p.322). Ottima further justifies the crime by evaluating their happiness as ample payment for Luca's life: "...but the joys it brought,/ Pay they or no its price? Come: they or it!" (11.162-163, p.325). Unlike Sebald, Ottima illustrates such intense desire to preserve their love that she seemingly feels no remorse for the crime. In the presence of her husband's corpse, she is able



to think of such a triviality as wine; and after calmly suggesting that they move Luca's body, Ottima announces, "We may sleep/ Anywhere in the whole wide house tonight." (11.115-116, p.324). To mask her feelings of guilt, she is even able to say, "I would go back and hold/ His two dead hands, and say, 'I hate you worse,/ 'Luca, than...'" (11.109-111, p.324). Sebald, however, agonizes with remorse, and Ottima determines to summon his passion in an attempt to keep him for her lover. She succeeds by recalling their first sensual happiness and cleverly connects this past experience with the present as she draws Sebald's attention to her hair:

I felt you  
Taper into a point the ruffled ends  
Of my loose locks 'twixt both your humid lips.  
My hair is fallen now: knot it again! (11.212-214, p.327)

Pippa's song, however, recalls Sebald's guilt, and his attempted suicide banishes Ottima's jealous guarding of their love. She responds, "Me!/ Me? no, no, Sebald, not yourself--kill me!" (11.270-271, p.329) and concludes the scene with, "Not me--to him, O God, be merciful!" (1.283, p.329). She rejects her jealous, passionate love through "the seizure of the knowledge of a higher, fleshless love of which she has never known." <sup>44</sup>

Whereas Sebald readily admits to feeling guilt as a result of the illicit love and the murder, Ottima pretends that she suffers no remorse. However, like Sebald, Ottima uses imagery which, with the rhythm of her speech, betrays her fears. Thus, to a greater extent than in the political plays and A Blot in the 'Scutcheon, imagery characterizes the jealous individuals. As in A Blot in the 'Scutcheon, animal imagery is absent, for the jealous characters



possess more sensitive natures and, unlike Earl Tresham, completely overcome the jealous guarding of their love.

Sebald, for example, uses images of destruction and death to mark the passing of their love, and he refuses to take solace in images of rebirth. He asks, "Morning?/ It seems to me a night with a sun added" (11.32-33, p.322) and later displays even greater confusion: "Off, off--take your hands off mine,/ 'T is the hot evening--off! oh, morning is it?" (11.112-113, p.324). The morning promises no hope for Sebald, who questions, "Where's dew, where's freshness?" (1.33, p.322). He thinks only of the drooping plant which he bruised during the night and notes his "elbow's mark/ I' the dust o' the sill " (11.34-35, p.322). Symbolically, he refuses to accept the black wine but, as if he were seeking absolution for his crime, he asks for the white wine and drinks to Ottima's black eyes. For Sebald, Ottima has already become the symbol of evil, which he personifies more vividly at the end of the drama. After hearing Pippa's song, which celebrates nature and affirms that all which Sebald feared lost still exists, he proclaims the death of his love for Ottima, for even her hair "That seemed to have a sort of life in it,/ Drops, a dead web" (11.247-248, p.328).

Ottima betrays her feeling of guilt much more subtly through her choice of images. Her opening speech, for example, indicates quite clearly that she is very much occupied with Luca's murder. As Honan explains, her feeling of guilt is revealed through her description of the "blood-red beam" of the sun, through re-creation of the illicit love and of Luca's murder, and through her commands





with "their short length and hushed quality."<sup>45</sup> Similarly, when Ottima recalls the lovers' "crowning night" (p.326), she reveals her preoccupation with the death when she states that the "black-blue canopy suffered descend" (l.186, p.326) and, portending Luca's murder, threatened to "smother up all life except our life" (l.188, p.326). Her description of the storm unveils her feeling of guilt, even in the past, over her affair with Sebald:

Buried in woods we lay, you recollect;  
 Swift ran the searching tempest overhead;  
 And ever and anon some bright white shaft  
 Burned thro' the pine-tree roof, here burned and there,  
 As if God's messenger thro' the close wood screen  
 Plunged and replunged his weapon at a venture,  
 Feeling for guilty thee and me. (ll.190-196, p.326)

The psychological complexities inherent in the character portraits of Pippa Passes are equalled by Browning's creation of Chiappino in A Soul's Tragedy. Park Honan notes that "in the two settings in which he is presented Chiappino comes to life as no previous figure of Browning's had outside Pippa Passes, and he is probably at least as fully revealed as Pippa herself, Ottima, Sebald, and the Monsignor."<sup>46</sup> As with Pippa Passes, the reason for Browning's successful character portrayal seems to be the movement from traditional dramatic form to the dramatic monologue. C. H. Herford says of the play, "The dramatic form, though still preserved, sets strongly towards monologue: the entire second act foreshadows unmistakably the great portrait studies of Men and Women."<sup>47</sup> James McCormick similarly attributes the drama's success to Browning's disregard for the theater's conventions: "Browning did not write A Soul's Tragedy for Macready and, released again from the shackles of the professional theater, he was able to



bring into the open the emotional turmoil and guilt compulsions of his characters." <sup>48</sup> Certainly, the drama diverges radically from the traditional form, for it has only two acts, the first written in poetry and the second in prose. The two acts present Chiappino in exactly opposing situations, and although each act can be regarded as a type of complete dramatic monologue, both acts are required to reveal completely Chiappino's character and consequently his jealous nature.

In the first act, Chiappino appears vehemently idealistic; however, his idealism is clouded by his cynical attitude toward the society as well as his friend Luitolfo and the woman he professes to love. When Chiappino first appears in conversation with Eulalia, his jealousy is soon revealed as the probable cause of his cynicism. He debases himself as he declares to Eulalia, "I, now--the homeless friendless penniless/ Proscribed and exiled wretch" (I, p.289), and in his ensuing speeches, he further emphasizes his lack of self-respect. Chiappino unwittingly reveals his jealousy, because he enhances his self-debasement through a comparison with Luitolfo. For example, he says,

I was born here, so was Luitolfo; both  
At one time, much with the same circumstance  
Of rank and wealth; and both, up to this night  
Of parting company, have side by side  
Still fared, he in the sunshine--I, the shadow. (I, p.290)

Because Chiappino thinks Luitolfo superior to himself, he behaves like a jealous individual by subjecting his friend to unfounded criticism. Eulalia assures Chiappino that Luitolfo is a sincere friend: "Luitolfo's first to place you o'er himself/ In all that





challenges respect and love" (I, p.290); however, Chiappino believes that he has received help from Luitolfo because of the latter's selfishness:

Well, he paid my fines,  
Nor missed a cloak from wardrobe, dish from table;  
He spoke a good word to the Provost here,  
Held me up when my fortunes fell away,  
--It had not looked so well to let me drop,-- (I, p.291)

Luitolfo, however, proves his devotion to his friend when he arrives and, contrary to what Chiappino has imagined, announces that he has killed the Provost. After this, Chiappino responds, for the first and last time in the drama, as a friend by offering to take Luitolfo's place and even to "die for him" (I, p.293). However, the reader's suspicions are aroused at the end of the act when Chiappino refuses, for the present, to direct the populace's admiration away from himself and to Luitolfo.

Chiappino is jealous not only of Luitolfo's personal attributes and position, but also of his love for Eulalia. He declares his love for Eulalia and is angered when she indicates that she has not been aware of his feelings. She states, "I hear this for the first time." (I, p.290); and when he insists, "You knew I loved you!" she replies, "Not so, on my faith!" (I, p.290). Eulalia's refusal to accept his love allows Chiappino to indulge further in self-pity. Characteristically, just as he debases Luitolfo, Chiappino also debases the relationship between his friend and Eulalia. For example, when Eulalia asks, "What forced/ Or forces me to be Luitolfo's bride?" (I, p.291), Chiappino replies:



There's my revenge, that nothing forces you.  
 No gratitude, no liking of the eye  
 Nor longing of the heart, but the poor bond  
 Of habit--here so many times he came,  
 So much he spoke, --all these compose the tie  
 That pulls you from me. (I, p.291)

In the second act, Chiappino proves that the lack of affection which he has attributed to Luitolfo actually applies to himself. Now that the jealous individual has gained self-esteem, he no longer requires assurance through Eulalia's love and consequently dismisses her: "Since you cannot understand this nor me, it is better we should part as you desire" (II, p.295).

To satisfy his jealous desire for recognition and power, Chiappino also dismisses his friend Luitolfo. Roma A. King notes that "his [Chiappino's] tragic error is in failing to maintain that moment of heroism when instinctively he offered his life for his friend. That he did not--could not--is the tragedy of Chiappino and of man." <sup>49</sup> Indeed, in this moment of sacrifice, Chiappino seems to have overcome his jealousy; however, "such poetry is fragile and of brief duration. It is inevitably followed by the prose of everyday human existence." <sup>50</sup> In the second act, Chiappino does not allow his idealism to overcome jealous rivalry. Instead, he seeks refuge in compromise, insisting to Ogniben, the symbol of his conscience, that he and his ideals must be reconciled "to an old form of government instead of proposing a new one" (II, p.296).

Through Ogniben, Chiappino learns to recognize and seemingly to overcome his jealousy. Ogniben, who, as Roma King suggests, is Chiappino's doppelgänger, <sup>51</sup> quickly recognizes Chiappino's jealous desire for esteem. For example, observing the relationship between



Chiappino and Eulalia, he notes, "You, the greater nature, needs must have a lesser one...--such a nature must comprehend you, as the phrase is, accompany and testify of your greatness from point to point onward" (II, p.296). He continually reasserts his intention to remind Chiappino of his ideals when he says, for example, "I help men to carry out their principles." (II, p.296); "Observe, I speak only as you profess to think and so ought to speak: I do justice to your own principles, that is all." (II, p.297); and "I only desired to do justice to the noble sentiments which animate you, and which you are too modest to duly enforce." (II, p.298). At the end of the drama, Ogniben humorously points to Chiappino's realization and rejection of his jealous desire for esteem when he notes that the octogenarian "who began by asking and expecting the whole of us to bow down in worship to him--why, I say he is advanced, for onward, very far, nearly out of sight like our friend Chiappino yonder" (II, p.298).

Ogniben frequently makes such use of similes to expose the jealous Chiappino's character. Chiappino himself betrays, through imagery, his own ignoble nature when he unwittingly likens himself to a savage. He explains to Eulalia that love for one woman is like "manifold uses in one instrument, as the savage has his sword, staff, sceptre and idol, all in one club-stick" (II, p.295). Ogniben similarly lowers Chiappino's social status when he notes that the latter is very much like "the newly emancipated slave" who "will adopt, in his own favor, the very measures of precaution, which pressed sorelied on himself as institutions of the tyranny he has





just escaped from" (II, p.297). A third example of a simile which illustrates Chiappino's uncontrolled jealous nature occurs at the end of the drama when Ogniben compares Chiappino to a child who wants "the whole world to break up, or suck in his mouth, seeing no other good in it" (II, p.298). Although no particular image pattern is evident in the first act of the drama, Ogniben's frequent use of similes during the second act aids in the characterization of the jealous Chiappino.

Like Pippa Passes and A Soul's Tragedy, "In a Balcony" diverges greatly from conventional dramatic form. In fact, in Browning's Star-Imagery, Smith is reluctant to classify "In a Balcony" according to genre and maintains that the work combines the techniques of "the original drama, the imitative drama, and the dramatic monologue."<sup>52</sup> Nevertheless, DeVane notes that "In a Balcony" marks a revival of Browning's interest in the drama;<sup>53</sup> therefore, like Elmer Edgar Stoll, one could classify the work as a closet drama.<sup>54</sup> However, the psychological complexities of Constance, Norbert, and the Queen reflect the character studies of the dramatic monologues. Consequently, "In a Balcony," perhaps more than any other drama written by Browning, subtly reveals the causes and effects of jealousy upon its victims, the Queen and Constance.

As in the dramatic monologues, characterization of the jealous individuals is enhanced by a subtle use of imagery in "In a Balcony." Star imagery is particularly important because of "the strict association of the star-image with the character of Norbert; for it is he rather than Constance or the Queen who approaches truth."<sup>55</sup>



Like the light imagery of Luria, the star imagery of "In a Balcony" symbolizes an ideal vision. Norbert's ideal vision is truth, and the truth of his life, he proclaims, is love: "Truth is the strong thing. Let man's life be true!/ And love's the truth of mine " (11.224-25, p.700). Neither Constance nor the Queen is as devoted to truth; therefore, neither quite understands the truth of her own situation in love, and consequently, both become victims of jealousy. Constance is particularly adamant in her refusal to allow Norbert to approach the Queen directly, and when Constance persuades Norbert to deceive the Queen, he replies, " 'Tis not my way; I have more hope in truth" (1.326, p.703). Like Norbert, the Queen pleads for truth saying to Constance, "--would you but tell the truth" (1.428, p.706) and later commanding, "Speak the truth!" (1.499, p.707). However, the Queen, like Constance, is not loyal to truth for, as the imagery suggests, she cannot bear the truth of life from which she has been shielded. Constance, for example, states that the Queen's soul, deprived of participation in life, is "starved/ Debarred of healthy food" (11.273-74, p.701), and the Queen herself says that she has observed life from a "pedestal/ where I grow marble" (11.393-94, p.705).

Both the Queen and Constance, avoiding truth, engage in deceit, the former deceiving herself and the latter deceiving Norbert and the Queen. Appropriately, both speak of love in terms of monetary images. The Queen, for example, asks Constance to change what Norbert says "into current coin" (1.585, p.710) and states that Constance shall have "some noble love, all gold" (1.589, p.710).





Similarly, Constance says to Norbert,

I know the thriftier way  
Of giving--haply, 't is the wiser way.  
Meaning to give a treasure, I might dole  
Coin after coin out (each, as that were all,  
With a new largess still at each despair)  
And force you keep in sight the deed....  
(11.609-614, pp. 710-711)

Norbert recognizes this almost commercial attitude toward love as a commodity to be bartered, for he says to Constance at the end of the drama, "Sell me--your soul of souls, for any price?" (1.898, p.718). He, on the other hand, does not present his love in terms of material images, but rather describes his love as living. He says to Constance, "And here's my love, here, living, at your feet" (1.879, p.718) and offers her his soul "still quivering in your hand" (1.879, p.717). Thus, the imagery of "In a Balcony" distinguishes the two jealous women, who share a similar attitude toward love and truth, from Norbert, who approaches the truth of love.

The Queen, like Chiappino, is a victim of jealous rivalry and jealousy in love, both of which are particularly evident during the second section of the drama when she is conversing with Constance. The first section of the play acquaints the reader with the Queen's character as it is perceived by Constance and Norbert. Two different opinions of her emerge, but both agree that the Queen has no knowledge of real life, because "she has stood thus fifty years/ The sole spectator in the gallery" (11.135-36, p.698) of paintings and statues. The Queen later substantiates this view, for she admits that she has never before experienced love and refers to herself as "the marble statue all the time/ They praise and point at as



preferred to life" (11.409-10, p.705). Since the Queen has always been a spectator in life, her jealousy of Constance's youth and beauty, as well as her jealousy, at the drama's end, of Norbert's love for Constance, is adequately motivated.

When the Queen appears in the drama, the reader is made aware that some of Constance's statements are false. For example, she is afraid that the Queen will prohibit her marriage to Norbert, and yet the Queen admits that she had originally decided to concede to Norbert's request:

He [Norbert] might say 'Give her hand and pay me so.'  
 And I (O Constance, you shall love me now.)  
 I thought, surmounting all the bitterness,  
 --'And he shall have it. I will make her blest,  
 ...  
 'These two shall have their joy and leave me here.' (11.454-60,  
 p.706)

Constance also says to Norbert, "Does she love me, I ask you? not a whit" (1.292, p.702); however, the Queen often expresses her affection. When she first enters, she declares, "I love you, Constance, from my soul." (1.343, p.703) and later repeats, "How I loved you from the first!" (1.488, p.707). This love, however, is not directed toward Constance as herself, but toward Constance as a representative of real life, youth, and beauty. The Queen's love for these qualities is so intense that, through her expressions of admiration, she unwittingly reveals that she is jealous of Constance. Like Chiappino, she compares herself unfavourably with her younger rival. She states that formerly she advised herself to " 'Leave love to girls. Be queen: let Constance love.' " (1.363, p.704); but now that she has discovered love, she says, "I am a woman now like you" (1.373, p.704).



Later, she remarks, "Some queens would hardly seek a cousin out/  
And set her by their side to take the eye" (11.489-90, p.707)  
and similarly notes, "put your cheek beside my cheek/ And what a  
contrast does the moon behold!" (11.505-06, p.708).

The Queen also makes comparisons which are in her favour, and  
these reflect her jealousy in love by revealing her fear that  
Constance is, after all, more likely to receive Norbert's affection.  
At first she expresses this fear to Constance:

Ah, but I fear you! You will look at me  
And say, 'she's old, she's grown unlovely quite  
'Who ne'er was beauteous: men want beauty still.'  
(11.387-89, p.705)

Gradually, however, she becomes more confident and begins to insist  
that, as the older woman, she is more capable of granting real  
love. The Queen confides to Constance that men love

so many women in their youth,  
And even in age they all love whom they please;  
And yet the best of them confide to friends  
That 't is not beauty makes the lasting love--  
They spend a day with such and tire the next:  
They like soul.... (11.524-529, p.708)

The Queen thus attempts to convince herself and Constance that she,  
and not the younger, more beautiful woman, is worthy of Norbert's  
love. Inevitably, she concludes, "You have the fair face: for the  
soul, see mine!/ I have the strong soul: let me teach you here"  
(11.552-53, p.709). At the same time, however, the Queen almost  
pleads with Constance to renounce Norbert, although Constance has  
not stated that she loves him. Earlier the Queen exposed her  
jealousy by admitting to "a second pang and worse" (1.433, p.706):

I felt, I saw, he loved--loved somebody.  
And Constance, my dear Constance, do you know,  
I did believe this while 't was you he loved. (11.338-40, p.706)





Now she confirms that she has not overcome her jealousy as she pleads, "Oh, tell him, Constance, you could never do/ What I will, --you it was not born in!" (11.542-43, p.709). Similarly, her jealousy is unconsciously revealed as she subtly attempts to draw Constance away from Norbert by suggesting that her own lover will have "Light hair, not hair like Norbert's, to suit yours:/ Taller than he is, since yourself are tall" (11.572-73, p.709).

The Queen's jealousy is fully revealed during this scene with Constance; therefore, the reader can easily imagine the intensity of her passion as she silently leaves Constance and Norbert at the end of the drama. Constance's jealousy, on the other hand, is not so easily discernible. E. E. Stoll, for example, refutes Stopford Brooke's proposal that Constance is a study of jealousy.<sup>56</sup> In The Poetry of Robert Browning, Brooke does seem unduly harsh in his analysis of Constance, for her sacrifice to the Queen is partly motivated by pity and gratitude. For example, she expresses her gratefulness during her first meeting with Norbert when she pleads,

I owe that withered woman everything--  
Life, fortune, you, remember! Take my part--  
Help me to pay her! (11.334-36, p.703)

After the scene during which the Queen exposes her "inmost heart" (1.581, p.708) to Constance and declares, "I cannot give him up--ah God,/ Not up now, even to you!" (11.500-01, p.708), Constance's sacrifice is quite conceivably motivated by her pity. Lying, she declares, "Yes, madam, he has loved you--long and well" (1.760, p.714) and readily offers Norbert to the Queen: "Take him--with my full heart! my work is praised/ By what comes of it. Be you happy,



both!" (11.769-70, p.715).

The last sentence of this quotation, however, may cause the reader to question the reason for Constance's sacrifice, for she wishes even Norbert happiness. Although he shows his dedication to the state, Norbert's proclamation of love for Constance is so convincing that one could hardly deem his being happy under such circumstances. Nevertheless, Constance continues to tempt him:

Here I yield  
My whole right in you to the Queen, observe!  
With her go put in practice the great schemes  
You teem with, follow the career else closed--  
Be all you cannot be except by her! (11.784-88, p.715)

If Constance felt assured of Norbert's love, she would be aware that he could not accept her sacrifice and, therefore, realize that her act would only hurt the Queen. Consequently, her sacrifice to Norbert seems motivated by jealousy to test his love. The fact that Constance is capable of such deceit is evidenced at the beginning of the drama when she insists that revelation of the truth will not gain the Queen's consent to the marriage.

Constance herself suggests that she is deliberately tempting Norbert when, after he states that the Queen is testing him, she warns,

Stay--not hers, the trap--  
Stay, Norbert--that mistake were worst of all!  
He is too cunning, madam! It was I,  
I, Norbert, who.... (11.838-41, p.717)

At the end of the drama, she admits to her folly: "I thought of men--as if you were a man./ Tempting him with a crown!" (11.911-12, p.719). After Norbert realizes that the Queen was not testing "to try me, what my love for Constance meant" (1.887, p.718), even he





implies that Constance has jealously tempted him:

Was it your love's mad trial to o'ertop  
 Mine by this vain self-sacrifice? well, still--  
 Though I might curse, I love you. (11.899-901, p.718)

The final evidence that Constance's sacrifice is not wholly motivated by pity and gratitude occurs before the Queen leaves. Norbert states, "You two glare each at each like panthers now" (1.895, p.718), and thus he pictures the two jealous rivals, hardly united by the love declared during their previous conversation. This simile is the only evidence of animal imagery in the drama, but it occurs significantly at the one moment at which each woman is aware of the other's jealousy.

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Psychological complexity is evident in each of the three characters of "In a Balcony" as well as in the characters of Pippa Passes and in Chiappino of A Soul's Tragedy. The theme of jealousy, therefore, is much more fully developed in these dramas than in the four political plays and in A Blot in the 'Scutcheon, all of which adhere to stage conventions. Although these plays which adhere to convention do not treat the theme of jealousy with great depth, they do illustrate Browning's early interest in the passion and recognition of its complexity. The four political plays all deal with jealous rivalry among characters seeking power; however, differences can be noted in the situations involving jealousy. Strafford and Colombe's Birthday present similar situations in that each drama exposes a group of courtiers jealous of an individual who is devoted to the ruling person, although both Strafford and Valence have higher ideals which are only symbolized by the King and by Colombe, respectively.



Luria is also devoted to an ideal; however, this devotion is not manifested in a love directed toward a single character. His ideal reflects a vision understood, as Luria proclaims, only by one from the East where God

glows above  
 With scarce an intervention, presses close  
 And palpitatingly, his soul o'er ours:  
 We feel him, nor by painful reason know! (V, p.315)

Luria continues saying, "And inasmuch as feeling, the East's gift,/ Is quick and transient--comes, and lo, is gone--," "Northern thought is slow and durable" (V, p.315). Luria recognizes the differences between himself and the Florentines and is thus aware of the racial prejudice which, in part, gives rise to Florentine jealousy. Husain pictures this prejudice quite clearly when he warns Luria:

There stands a wall  
 'Twixt our expansive and explosive race  
 And those absorbing, concentrating men. (II, p.303)

The situation in Luria can be compared to the situation in Colombe's Birthday where the courtiers openly declare their prejudice against Valence, a man of lower social status. The jealousy of these courtiers and of the Florentines is thus aroused partly because they feel defeated by a man who, they believe, is inferior to them.

Of the political dramas, King Victor and King Charles portrays, perhaps, the most unique situation revealing jealousy. Instead of presenting an individual subjected to the hatred of a group of jealous rivals, Browning presents a father who is jealous of his son's political success. King Victor, like the rivals of the other political plays, plans intrigues and expresses ill-will toward Charles. The fact that Victor, after King Charles' success, is able to steal "back with



serpent wiles to ruin Charles" ("King Charles," Part I, p.158) suggests that the former King feels very little affection, if not actual hatred, for his son, and his self-centeredness is evidenced by his initial intent of leaving Charles to accept the blame for his own mistakes. The intrigues of the courtiers in Strafford and in Colombe's Birthday and of the Florentines in Luria against the object of their jealousy similarly demonstrate their hatred and selfishness. In Colombe's Birthday, for example, Guibert openly declares, "Selfishness is best again./ I thought of turning honest-what a dream/ Let's wake now!" (IV, p.243). Earl Tresham, although not involved in jealous rivalry, also demonstrates a certain amount of self-centeredness and even hatred for Mildred in his rash condemnation and sacrifice of the lovers for the preservation of his ancestral honour. Thus, Browning demonstrates his early understanding of the complex nature of jealousy, which usually appears in association with other passions and whose victims often possess similar character traits.

The three dramas which illustrate a movement away from stage convention and toward the dramatic monologue form present even more vividly the association of other passions with jealousy and the common characteristics of jealous individuals. A Soul's Tragedy, for example, creates an abrupt reversal of fortune to portray Chiappino's character and illustrates the antagonism of love and hate within the jealous individual. Although these passions are tempered in Chiappino, Act I implies that he feels even some affection for Luitolfo which, however, is clouded by his cynicism. Chiappino's





grasping for power, evident in the second act, confirms that self-love conquers any love or concern expressed for his friend or his people during the first meeting with Eulalia. The students of Pippa Passes openly declare their hatred, but the Ottima-Sebald episode delves more deeply into the passions of love and hate within the jealous individual. Whereas jealous, self-centered love for Ottima has caused Sebald to kill Luca, the murder, in turn, has aroused Sebald's hatred for his mistress. "In a Balcony" also illustrates that, through jealousy, the love between two people, between Constance and the Queen, can turn to hate.

Although the dramas represent different degrees of complexity in their treatment of the theme of jealousy, they all portray Browning's interest in the different manifestations of the passion by distinguishing between jealous rivalry, jealous preservation, and jealousy in love. Of note is the fact that the jealous characters in Browning's dramas, except for Chiappino, Sebald, and the students of Pippa Passes, are of the nobility or possess higher social status.

Chiappino, however, is preparing to assume the leading position of provost when his jealous nature is exposed, and the art students and Sebald, a music teacher, also occupy elevated positions because they potentially represent the artist in society. Browning's preoccupation with the jealousy of individuals elevated in their social and intellectual status is also evident in the dramatic monologues, as is the use of imagery to portray the nature and intensity of an individual's jealousy. The ironical use of animal imagery to characterize jealous individuals of the nobility, as evidenced in



the four political dramas, is further developed and used to much greater effect in the dramatic monologues. However, as in the dramas, the more sensitive and philosophic jealous speakers are not associated with animal images but with other image patterns that aid in character revelation. The dramatic monologues, like the three dramas which demonstrate a movement toward the dramatic monologue form, present a much more complex study of the theme of jealousy by disregarding Macready's formula and by concentrating, instead, on Browning's aim of presenting "Action in Character, rather than Character in Action."





## Chapter II

### The Dramatic Monologues

Since a study of Browning's dramas reveals that the theme of jealousy is most adequately treated in those plays which illustrate a movement toward the dramatic monologue, the treatment of the theme within this genre must be examined. Although Dramatic Lyrics and Dramatic Romances and Lyrics were published while Browning was still writing dramas, both represent Browning's devotion "to the development of the short dramatic poem" which "provided the mode of expression best suited for delineating his men and women."<sup>1</sup> Roma A. King, in his book The Focusing Artifice, notes a definite progression in Browning's development of the dramatic monologue form. King states that in Dramatic Romances and Lyrics Browning "begins to focus more specifically upon the internal process by which a character is brought to a moment of self-realization. He still has not achieved the mastery that was later to distinguish his handling of men and women, however."<sup>2</sup> King cites the poems of Men and Women as representatives of "the full maturing of his [Browning's] powers in the short dramatic form."<sup>3</sup> Dramatis Personae is acknowledged as a continuation of Men and Women; however, King also notes that this volume presents "Browning's increased preoccupation with ideas. Even in the best poems he subtly shifts emphasis from character development to thought, from unified experience to impassioned argument."<sup>4</sup> Despite the continuing progression and perfection of the dramatic monologue form,



the theme of jealousy is not particularly notable or emphasized in any single publication of dramatic poems. Instead, the theme recurs within each of Dramatic Lyrics, Dramatic Romances and Lyrics, Men and Women, and Dramatis Personae, and each contains dramatic monologues in which the speaker's jealousy is superbly delineated through his psychological complexity.

Before resuming the discussion of the theme of jealousy, a description of the dramatic monologue as a distinct genre must be attempted. Although critics generally acclaim the dramatic monologue as the basis for Browning's fame, few have agreed upon a definition of the form. Definitions have been offered; however, they often appear either too rigid or incomplete. William Lyon Phelps, for example, states that the dramatic monologue is

a series of remarks, usually confessional, addressed either orally or in an epistolary form to another person or to a group of listeners. These other figures, though they do not speak, are necessary to the understanding of the monologue.<sup>5</sup>

Ina Beth Sessions offers an even more systematic classification, which includes the "Perfect," the "Imperfect," the "Formal," and the "Approximate" dramatic monologues. The "Perfect dramatic monologue" is described as

that literary form which has the definite characteristics of speaker, audience, occasion, revelation of character, interplay between speaker and audience, dramatic action and action which takes place in the present.<sup>6</sup>

Park Honan, who notes that "the epithet 'dramatic monologue' did not come into very common use until the twentieth century and never seems to have been used by Browning himself,"<sup>7</sup> objects to



# I. B. Sessions' definition, stating that

no classification system which attempts to isolate common factors in many dramatic monologues at the expense of omitting or even minimizing characteristics that account for the chief effect of any one of them<sup>8</sup> can claim to be a permanent or useful classification.

Since, as Honan notes, "a good deal of uncertainty has existed and still does exist as to what the essence of the dramatic monologue may be,"<sup>9</sup> one must rely upon a very general definition. Roma A. King, avoiding even the term "dramatic monologue," states that

Browning's short poems, then, defy rigid classification. They are often referred to loosely as dramatic monologues and judged by arbitrary standards supposedly essential to the genre: speaker, auditor, setting, situation. Clearly, however, many of Browning's finest achievements among the shorter poems are deficient in one or more of these formal characteristics.<sup>10</sup>

Consequently, Browning's dramatic monologues defy definition through objective criteria. To understand Browning's dramatic poems, one must, as Robert Langbaum suggests, look into the dramatic monologue and consider its effect, its way of meaning."<sup>11</sup> For Langbaum "sympathy is the primary law of the dramatic monologue,"<sup>12</sup> and he bases his very credible description of Browning's dramatic poems upon the reader's sympathy:

Although the fact that a poem is a monologue helps to determine our sympathy for the speaker, since we must adopt his viewpoint as our entry into the poem, the monologue quality remains nevertheless a means, and not the only means, to the end-- the end being to establish the reader's sympathetic relation to the poem, to give him "facts from within."<sup>13</sup>

To obtain the "facts from within," however, the reader must be confronted by the speaker and thus, to conclude, one can resort to Park Honan's very broad definition of the dramatic monologue:





"A single discourse by one whose presence is indicated by the poet but who is not the poet himself." <sup>14</sup>

Just as the dramatic monologue evades classification, so does, to a certain extent, Browning's treatment of the theme of jealousy. Nevertheless, three types of jealousy are discernible in Browning's dramas, and these include the jealousy in love whereby an individual is jealous of another person who is his real or imagined rival in love, the jealous guarding or preservation of a possession demonstrated by both Earl Tresham and Ottima, and the jealous rivalry evident in the courtiers of the political plays. Jealousy in love is least often dealt with in Browning's dramas, for only Chiappino and the Queen are jealous of the relationships between Luitolfo and Eulalia and Constance and Norbert, respectively. Similarly, although the dramatic monologues also present these three types of jealousy, they least often expose jealousy in love. Jealous rivalry, on the other hand, receives Browning's attention most often in both his dramas and dramatic monologues. A study of the theme of jealousy in Browning's dramatic monologues can be made by concentrating upon the three types of jealousy, with the reservation that a character need not be the victim of only one type of jealousy.

As in the stage dramas, the jealous characters in the dramatic monologues are frequently the social elite representing the nobility and the church; and, progressing beyond the dramas, Browning also studies the passion of jealousy in the intellectual elite, particularly artists and philosophers. Browning does not, however, neglect characters of more common rank such as the speakers of



"James Lee's Wife," "Cristina," "A Light Woman," "Too Late," "A Woman's Last Word," and "Any Wife to Any Husband"; nor does he ignore perverted, deranged, or grotesque personalities such as Porphyria's lover and the speaker of "Instans Tyrannus." The dramatic monologues also demonstrate progression beyond most of the dramas in the use of imagery and rhythm to reflect the quality and intensity of a speaker's jealousy. As in the dramas, the ironic association of jealous nobility and, in addition, jealous clergy and artists with animal images is evident particularly in "The Flight of the Duchess," "Instans Tyrannus," "Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister," and "Youth and Art." The first three dramatic monologues present animal imagery to portray the rather ignoble nature of the jealous individuals who vehemently proclaim their hatred for their imagined opponents. The animal imagery of "Youth and Art," on the other hand, as well as that of "A Light Woman," "Too Late," and "A Woman's Last Word," characterizes speakers whose jealous passion is more refined and less, if at all, malignant. Significantly, animal imagery does not characterize more sensitive and thoughtful jealous characters. The imagery of "Andrea del Sarto" and of "James Lee's Wife," for example, suggests no feeling of hatred and malice but exposes more poetic natures, like the speaker of "Cristina," who meditate upon their situations. Finally, other individual image patterns expose a certain aspect of the speaker's character and of the nature of his jealousy. The Bishop of Saint Praxed's Church, for example, reveals his self-centeredness and sensuousness through his choice of imagery, the speaker of "Any Wife to Any Husband"





employs monetary images to symbolize her concept of the marital relationship, and the Duke of Ferrara becomes uncharacteristically poetic only when he describes his last Duchess.

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The Duke of "My Last Duchess" is an example of a victim demonstrating all three types of jealousy. Louis S. Friedland states that the Duke's jealousy "may be termed an arch-egotist's overweening desire for possessiveness,"<sup>15</sup> and indeed, the entire dramatic monologue revolves about the Duke as he unwittingly reveals the good nature of his last wife and the truth of his own jealousy, pride, and cruelty. He begins the poem with the reference to "my" last Duchess and ends his discourse with the word "me," and thus he continually draws the auditor's attention to himself. He first reveals his jealous guarding of his possessions when, referring to the painting of the Duchess, he informs the envoy that "none puts by/ The curtain I have drawn for you, but I" (11.9-10, p.368).<sup>16</sup> He soon indicates that his jealous guarding was inflicted even upon the living Duchess and so gives the first suggestion that he has also feared a rival vying for her love:

Sir, 't was not  
Her husband's presence only, called that spot  
Of joy into the Duchess' cheek: perhaps  
Fra Pandolf chanced to say 'Her mantle laps  
'Over my lady's wrist too much,' or 'Paint  
'Must never hope to reproduce the faint  
'Half-flush that dies along her throat:' such stuff  
Was Courtesy, she thought, and cause enough  
For calling up that spot of joy. (11.13-21, p.368)

He also suspects other rivals, for he notes that the Duchess "liked whate'er/ She looked on, and her looks went everywhere" (11.23-24)



and that she ranked his "gift of a nine-hundred-years-old-name" (1.33) with "anybody's gift" (1.34). Toward the end of his monologue, the Duke, attempting to place all blame upon his wife, unwittingly informs the reader that his own jealous guarding and his jealousy in love have caused his commands so that "all smiles stopped together" (1.46, p.368):

Oh sir, she smiled, no doubt,  
Whene'er I passed her; but who passed without  
Much the same smile? (11.43-45, p.368)

The Duke's jealousy in love certainly implies that he is engaged in real or imagined rivalry with other men; however, one may also detect a jealous rivalry, on the Duke's part only, with the Duchess. He is quite aware of his wife's admirable qualities, for he ironically mentions these in his attempt to condemn her. By use of poetic description, he unwittingly creates a sympathetic portrait of the Duchess as a beautiful, benevolent woman. Referring to the painting, he notes "the depth and passion" of the Duchess' "earnest glance" (1.8), "that spot/ of joy" (11.14-15) in her cheek, and the "Half-flush that dies along her throat" (1.19). The Duke also states that she had a heart "too soon made glad,/ Too easily impressed" (11.22-23) and that she appreciated "the dropping of the daylight in the West" (1.26), "the bough of cherries some officious fool/ Broke in the orchard for her" (11.27-28), and the "white mule/ She rode with round the terrace" (11.28-29). He does not say anything about her which could invite censure from the envoy or the reader, nor does he suggest that anyone, besides himself, dislikes the Duchess. Despite himself, therefore, he creates a favourable



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picture of his wife and may thereby be revealing his real but unconscious admiration and jealousy of those qualities which he does not possess.

The implication of the poem is that the Duke's jealousy destroys the Duchess physically but perhaps not spiritually. Browning makes a similar comment upon the power of jealousy in love in "In a Gondola," for although the jealous husband kills his wife's lover, the lover remains victorious. Dying, he proclaims:

The Three, I do not scorn  
To death, because they never lived: but I  
Have lived indeed, and so--(yet one more kiss)--can die!  
(11.229-231, p.383)

Roma King explains that

We are made to sympathize with the couple, accepting their rendezvous as right and rejecting the husband's revenge as wrong. Although defying external codes, they remain true to their inner beings asserting the supremacy of love over social and moral conventions.<sup>17</sup>

However, not all of Browning's poems dealing with jealousy in love, which includes the victim's real or imagined rival, show love to be triumphant. In "The Statue and the Bust," for example, the lovers do not assert "the supremacy of love over social and moral conventions," and consequently the husband's jealousy, to some extent, determines the fate of the lady and the Duke:

Calmly he [the husband] said that her lot was cast,  
That the door she had passed was shut on her  
Till the final catafalk repassed. (11.55-57, p.625)

Neither "In a Gondola" nor "The statue and the Bust" can be termed "dramatic monologues" according to Honan's definition, for neither poem presents "a single discourse by one whose presence is indicated by the poet but who is not the poet himself." "In a Gondola"



presents an exchange between two people, and the speaker of the last thirty-six lines of "The Statue and the Bust" might well be the poet himself. Both poems concentrate upon the presentation of Browning's philosophy that man must "contend to the uttermost/ For his life's set prize, be it what it will!" ("The Statue and the Bust," ll.242-243, p.632). Character revelation is of secondary importance, and therefore the theme of jealousy is not developed beyond the indication of its presence and of its effects upon the lovers.

Like "The Statue and the Bust," "Youth and Art" and "Too Late" present the effects of unfulfilled love, but both poems are discourses by single speakers whose jealous natures are more fully revealed. The woman of "Youth and Art" laments, "This could have happened once,/ And we missed it, lost it forever" (ll.67-68, p.849); and through her reminiscence, she suggests that she and the sculptor, like the Duke and the lady of "The Statue and the Bust," allowed art to replace life. Both "for fun watched each other's windows" (l.20, p.848), but neither approached the other. By expressing her jealousy of rivals, Kate Brown proves her love for the sculptor:

I did look, sharp as a lynx,  
     (And yet the memory rankles)  
 When models arrived, some minx  
     Tripped up-stairs, she and her ankles (ll.41-44, p.848).

In the following stanza, she states that she gained revenge through her belief that the sculptor was equally jealous:

But I think I gave you as good!  
     'That foreign fellow,--who can know  
 'How she pays, in a playful mood,  
     'For his tuning her that piano?' (ll.45-48, p.849)





These two stanzas picturing jealousy are ironic, for while the first suggests the speaker's love, the latter illustrates the failure of this love. Instead of revealing her love to the sculptor, Kate Brown merely indulges in imagined jealous revenge.

The fact that the speaker's revenge was only imagined suggests that her jealousy might have been intense but certainly not of a malignant nature. Although the theme of the poem is as serious as that of "The Statue and the Bust," the light tone and rhythm, as well as the imagery, reflect the nature of the speaker's passion. She does not picture herself and the sculptor as cunning, predatory animals, but rather as "a sparrow on the housetop lonely" and as "a lone she-bird of his feather" (ll.3 & 4, p.847). She continues this image pattern when she says, "I chirped, cheeped, trilled and twittered" (l.10, p.847) and notes that "spring bade the sparrows pair" (l.33, p.848). This image pattern thus contradicts the one harsh simile in the poem, "I did look, sharp as a lynx," to suggest that her jealousy, although "yet the memory rankles," has been subdued during the intervening years.

Browning presents a more intricate portrait of the speaker of "Too Late," and consequently, his jealousy in love is more complex and more subtly revealed than that of the woman in "Youth and Art." The animal images employed by the speaker are harsher than those presented by Kate Brown and thus indicate that his jealousy is of a more malignant nature, a fact which is reflected in his attitude toward Edith's husband. The speaker's abnormal state is also reflected in his choice of animal images to express his emotions.



For example, he says that he wreaks

like a bull, on the empty coat,  
Rage, its late wearer is laughing at!  
Tear the collar to rags, having missed his throat  
Strike stupidly on--- (11.44-47, p.805)

Later, he states, "I was the scapegrace, this rat belled/ The cat, this fool got his whiskers scratched." (11.75-76, p.806) and compares himself to the man who "was kicked like a dog/ From gutter to cess-pool" (11.110-111, p.807). These three examples of animal imagery picture the predatory instincts which are reflected in the speaker's antagonism, resulting from his jealousy, to Edith's husband.

As is indicated by the imagery, the speaker's sorrow over Edith's death is much more poignant and tragic than Kate Brown's nostalgic longing for a lost love. This speaker demonstrates a genuine and enduring love, but, like the woman of "Youth and Art," he may be erroneously imagining that his love was meant to be reciprocated. Laurence Perrine states that "the speaker is obsessed, indeed, by a need to convince Edith that he loved her more than her husband--that she made a mistake in preferring her husband to him." <sup>18</sup> This obsession recurs throughout the poem after the speaker declares that Edith's death confirms God's sanctioning of their love:

Time would tell,  
And the end declare what man for you  
What woman for me, was the choice of God.  
But Edith dead! no doubting more! (11.16-19, p.804)

At this point, referring to the husband as "the other" (1.15), the jealous speaker mentions for the first time his rival in love and continues to reiterate his scorn throughout his discourse. For example, he challenges the dead Edith, "What did he do? You be



judge!" (1.61, p.805) and then commences to act as judge himself:

"But, as if he loved you! No, not he,/ Nor anyone else in the world, 't is plain" (11.67-68, p.806). Later, he degrades the husband by accusing him of being not only an insincere lover, but also a bad poet:

My rival, the proud man,--prize your pink  
Of poets! A poet he was! I've guessed:  
He rhymed you his rubbish nobody read,  
Loved you and doved you--did not I laugh! (11.87-90, p.806)

As Laurence Perrine notes, the reader has no reason to believe the speaker, for he offers no evidence to support his estimation of the poet.<sup>19</sup> Perrine continues to question the speaker's credibility as he points out that, whereas the husband is assigned a specific vocation, none is given to the speaker: "In fact, why did Browning specify that the husband was a poet (especially an unpopular poet) if not to bring the speaker's judgment into question?"<sup>20</sup> The speaker's contention that the poet did not love his wife is equally unsubstantiated and is labelled by Perrine as a delusion which "is the product of his [the speaker's] jealousy."<sup>21</sup> The tendency to censure his rival unjustly seems characteristic of the jealous victim, for the speaker's rejection of the poet's love for Edith is like the jealous Chiappino's degradation of the relationship between Luitolfo and Eulalia. The speaker does not envision the poet's demonstration of love and grief even after his wife's death, for the speaker claims that while he is bleeding "these tears in the dark/ Till comfort come and the last be bled" (11.94-95, p.806), the husband is not grieving but perfunctorily "tagging your epitaph" (1.96, p.806).





However, unlike Chiappino, the jealous speaker demonstrates a genuine love which is evident in his sorrow and regret throughout the dramatic monologue and particularly in the eleventh stanza in which he reminisces upon Edith's appearance.

"A Light Woman" also presents jealousy in love and as in "Youth and Art" and "Too Late," love remains unfulfilled. In this case, however, love fails not because of a lack of action, but because of too much action by the speaker, who claims that a determination to save his friend from a light woman caused him to prove her untrue. The speaker vividly describes the jealousy of his friend who "goes shaking and white" (1.25, p.622):

And I did it, he thinks, as a very thief:

'Though I love her--that, he comprehends--

'One should master one's passions, (love, in chief)

'And be loyal to one's friends!' (11.29-32, p.623)

The speaker does not, however, admit to his own jealousy which is unconsciously revealed through his discourse. He admits, "'T is an awkward thing to play with souls,/ And matter enough to save one's own" (11.45-46, p.623), but he does not indicate how he has saved the soul of his friend. Donald Hair notes that "the act, however, saved no one, and may destroy all three."<sup>22</sup> The power of the speaker's jealousy poses this threat of destruction, for his contention that he wishes to save his friend from the supposedly "light woman" seems merely an excuse for proving that he is the more successful rival in love. Through the use of animal imagery, the speaker, to a greater extent than the speaker of "Too Late," portrays his own predatory instincts and thus shows his contempt for his rival who is degraded. The speaker says, "The eagle am I, with my fame in



the world,/ The wren is he, with his maiden face" (11.21-22, p.622).

Similarly, while planning his scheme, the speaker notes,

And before my friend be wholly hers,  
     How easy to prove to him, I said,  
 An eagle's the game her pride prefers,  
     Though she snaps at the wren instead! (11.13-16, p.622)

Although the speaker originally pictures the "light woman" "with her hunting noose" (1.6, p.622), in the ninth stanza, he portrays himself as a predator as he expresses his satisfaction with his conquest:

And she,--she lies in my hand as tame  
     As a pear late basking over a wall;  
 Just a touch to try and off it came;  
     'T is mine,--can I let it fall? (11.33-36, p.623)

Unlike the speaker of "Too Late," this speaker does not love the "light woman," but he too suggests an awareness of his guilt. After he has proven himself as the successful rival, he feels uncomfortable with his act. He says to the reader, "What I seem to myself, do you ask of me?/ No hero, I confess" (11.43-44, p.623) and, indeed, the entire dramatic monologue seems to be a plea for understanding. The question with which he begins his discourse is almost rhetorical, for the reader's pity must inevitably be directed to the speaker who deludes himself by failing to recognize his own jealousy. The speaker of "The Laboratory," on the other hand, expresses her jealousy quite vehemently. In the first stanza she asks, "Which is the poison to poison her, prithee?" (1.4, p.440) and immediately reveals that her jealousy in love is the reason for her planned revenge:

He is with her, and they know that I know  
 Where they are, what they do: they believe my tears flow  
 While they laugh, laugh at me, at me fled to the drear  
 Empty church, to pray God in, for them!--I am here. (11.5-8, p.440)





Not content with killing her rival, the speaker, like the Duke of Ferrara, wishes to hurt the man whom she supposedly loves:

Not that I bid you spare her the pain;  
 Let death be felt and the proof remain:  
 Brand, burn up, bite into its grace--  
 He is sure to remember her dying face! (11.37-40, p.441)

The woman treats her jealousy lightly and shows no hesitation in seeking her revenge except when she considers that the same fate might befall her. She questions, "If it hurts her, beside, can it ever hurt me?" (1.44, p.441) and later exclaims anxiously, "But brush this dust off me, lest horror it brings" (1.47, p.441).

Quite unlike the woman of "The Laboratory," Andrea del Sarto seeks no vengeance upon his wife's "cousin" and even endorses this illicit love. Although the presence of Lucrezia's lover creates a situation conducive to jealousy in love, this dramatic monologue more clearly presents a second type of jealousy, jealous guarding of a possession. Such jealousy can also be inherent in lovers' relationships; however, the jealous victim does not feel threatened by a rival. Instead, the jealous individual seeks total possession of his partner and thereby usually stifles the relationship.

"Andrea del Sarto" represents the dearth of love which results not only from Andrea's failure as a husband, but also as a painter and as a man. He is quite aware that his marital relationship has failed, for he pleads with Lucrezia, "Let us but love each other. Must you go?/ That Cousin here again? he waits outside?" (11.219-220, p.678). However, he does not succumb to a jealous rage and only once in his monologue asks, "Ah, but what does he,/ The Cousin! what does he to please you more?" (11.242-243, p.679). Andrea pleads



for Lucrezia's love and understanding throughout the monologue, and the fact that she rarely heeds his pleas is revealed at the beginning of his discourse: "No, my Lucrezia; bear with me for once!" (1.2, p.673). Andrea then continues, "Sit down and all shall happen as you wish" (1.3, p.673), a statement which suggests Lucrezia's dominance over her husband. Andrea is also aware of his wife's indifference to his art, for he says, "You don't understand/ Nor care to understand about my art" (11.54-55, p.674). This indifference is illustrated during the course of the monologue, for she does not remember that Michael Agnolo had praised Andrea for his ability "to plan and execute" (1.191, p.677), and Andrea mentions that she smears his paintings "carelessly passing with your robes afloat" (1.75, p.674). Andrea realizes that Lucrezia is interested only in his ability to earn the money necessary to pay her "cousin's" debts, for he pathetically remarks, "More gaming debts to pay? you smiled for that?/ Well, let smiles buy me! have you more to spend?" (11.222-223, p.678).

The entire dramatic monologue is marked by Andrea's compliance with Lucrezia's wishes, and even his speech is controlled so as not to antagonize her. Although this passivity is responsible for his failure as a husband, it enables him to keep Lucrezia with him and so retain her as an excuse for his failures. He even believes that he possesses her, for he says ironically, "You beautiful Lucrezia that are mine!" (1.176, p.677). As Donald Hair notes, "The perfection which Andrea sees in Lucrezia's appearance and in technical aspects of his art is, ironically, a measure of his limitations," <sup>23</sup>



and yet the "faultless painter" recognizes his limitations as an artist:

There burns a truer light of God in them,  
In their vexed beating stuffed and stopped-up brain,  
Heart, or whate'er else, than goes on to prompt  
This low-pulsed forthright craftsman's hand of mine.  
Their works drop groundward, but themselves, I know,  
Reach many a time a heaven that's shut to me. (11.79-84, p.675)

Andrea's use of imagery further reveals his awareness of his artistic failure, for he states that in his work "a common greyness silvers everything" (1.35, p.673) and that "All is silver-grey/ Placid and perfect with my art" (11.98-99, p.675). Both his life and work are pictured as "a twilight-piece" (1.49, p.674), an image that is intensified by Andrea's statements that the evening is also grey (1.228, p.678) and that "autumn grows, autumn in everything" (1.45, p.674).

Andrea's use of imagery, however, also reveals his unwillingness to accept the responsibility for his failures and his tendency to blame Lucrezia. For example, he pictures himself as an animal trapped by his wife, his "serpentining beauty" (1.26, p.673): "And the low voice my soul hears, as a bird/ The fowler's pipe, and follows to the snare--" (11.124-25, p.676). Thus, he constantly reasserts that Lucrezia has hindered his progress. He says, "Had you enjoined them on me, given me soul,/ We might have risen to Rafael, I and you!" (11.118-19, p.676). Later, he begins to blame her for his failure in France: "And had you not grown restless..." (1.166, p.677); and at the end of the poem, Andrea frees himself from all responsibility, even after death. In heaven, he says, Leonard, Rafael, and Agnolo will continue to surpass him:





the three first without a wife,  
 While I have mine! So-still they overcome  
 Because there's still Lucrezia,--as I choose.  
 (11.264-266, p.679)

All is, indeed, as he chooses, for he chooses jealously to possess Lucrezia, paradoxically by subjecting himself to her will. To ensure that Lucrezia will remain with him, Andrea even encourages her relationship with her lover, and thus self-deceptively frees himself of the responsibility for his failure as an artist, a husband, and a man.

The speakers of "James Lee's Wife" and "Any Wife to Any Husband" are both women who, like Andrea del Sarto, demonstrate a jealous guarding of their love. The reason for each woman's jealousy, which usually arises from an inner weakness or an awareness of failure, however, is not revealed by the speakers. Whereas Andrea del Sarto expresses his realization of failure and his ironic evasion of success, the two women merely lament their failing marital relationships and thus unconsciously reveal that each has hindered the progress of love through her excessive possessiveness. As Roma King says of "James Lee's Wife," "Browning emphasizes less the causes than the inevitability of alienation."<sup>24</sup> Alienation is inevitable because James Lee's wife reveals her fear of change and thus her attitude toward love as a static relationship in which each partner must lose his individuality through commitment to the other. For her, change symbolizes evil and destruction. For example, she pictures "some ships, safe in port indeed" (II, 1.40, p.778) as "Rot and rust,/ Run to dust" (II, 11.41-42, p.778) and fears that



the changing seasons, "November's rebuff" (III, 1.74, p.779), signal a disintegration of her marriage: "But why must cold spread? but wherefore bring change/ To the spirit...?" (IV, 11.75-76, p.779).

Even after she has accepted change as the law of life, she associates change, "the old woe o' the world" (III, 11.217, p.784), with sorrow.

The speaker is continually equating life with love, as she does at the beginning of her discourse when she begins to suspect the failure of her marriage. After she notes that the world has changed, she expresses her fear that James Lee's love will also change:

Look in my eyes!  
 Wilt thou change too?  
 Should I fear surprise?  
 Shall I find aught new  
 In the old and dear,  
 In the good and true,  
 With the changing year? (I, 11.8-14, p.777)

She illustrates her equation of love and life more explicitly at the end of her dramatic monologue when she addresses her husband saying, "Well, you may, you must, set down to me/ Love that was life, life that was love" (IX, 11.358-359, p.789). The irony of the poem lies in the fact that she blames James Lee for not demonstrating the same jealous guarding of their love. After describing her own love, she laments, "But did one touch of such love for me/ Come in a word or a look of yours...?" (IX, 11.363-364, p.789). When her fear of James Lee's declining love has become a certainty, she ironically says to him, "I will be quiet and talk with you,/ And reason why you are wrong" (IV, 1.109, p.780). She then continues to vindicate herself by stating, "I took you--how could I otherwise?/ For a world to me, and more" (IV, 11.87-88, p.780) and later repeats, "The man





nature like the changing seasons, the "weak earth" (IV, 1.98, p.780), the burnt turf, the impenetrable rock, and the peasant's hand; this speaker shows a less sensitive and discerning mind through her use of monetary images to symbolize the marital bond. For example, she predicts,

So must I see, from where I sit and watch,  
My own self sell myself, my hand attach  
Its warrant to the very thefts from me--  
(11.79-81, p.592)

and later concedes to her husband to "Re-issue looks and words from the old mint,/ Pass them afresh," (11.88-89, p.592) and to "Re-coin thyself and give it them to spend" (1.91, p.592). The imagery thus suggests that a possible reason for her jealous guarding of her marriage is her suspicion of a weak, artificial bond between her husband and herself, an ironic contradiction to her belief in an eternal, spiritual marriage.

Unlike James Lee's wife, this speaker seems quite assured that her husband's love has been as great as her own. She states, "our inmost beings met and mixed" (1.50, p.591) and even concedes, "And yet thou art the nobler of us two" (1.115, p.593). Nevertheless, she too blames her husband for the imagined failure of the marriage after her death and ironically fails to see that her own jealous anxiety for the preservation of the marriage is destroying their relationship in the present. Roma A. King states that "their love is threatened less by the future than by the present, by the woman's doubts as much as by the man's possible unfaithfulness."<sup>28</sup> For example, she contradicts her own confirmation of his love's intensity



when she remarks,

And is it not the bitterer to think  
That, disengage our hands and thou wilt sink  
Although thy love was love in very deed? (11.31-33, p.590)

Consoling herself with the belief that her spirit will remain eternally united with her husband, she concedes, "Love so, then, if thou wilt! Give all thou canst/ Away to new faces" (11.85-86, p.592); however, she again despairs exclaiming, "Might I die last and show thee!" (1.103, p.593). In a last desperate attempt to believe that she will always possess her husband, the speaker appeals to his pride rather than to his love, to which she reverts with the conclusion of her discourse:

Thy love shall hold me fast  
Until the little minute's sleep is past  
And I wake saved. (11.124-126, p.593)

However, her final ironic statement, "And yet it will not be!" (1.126, p.593) indicates that she has not overcome her jealous guarding of her marriage.

"Cristina" and "Porphyria's Lover" both present male speakers afflicted with a jealous desire to preserve love, but whereas the jealousy of "Cristina's" speaker has no effect upon a relationship which does not exist, the jealousy of Porphyria's lover causes physical destruction, an intensification of the marital deterioration caused by the jealous guarding of the women in "James Lee's Wife" and "Any Wife to Any Husband." William Clyde DeVane says that "Cristina" is an example of Browning's interest in the doctrine of elective affinities, which states that some men and women are immediately attracted to each other by love,<sup>29</sup> and Mrs. Orr similarly



notes that the man and woman are united by a glance and "both have recognized in this union the predestined object of their life." <sup>30</sup>

One may, however, doubt whether Cristina feels the momentary glance's effects ascribed to her by the speaker. Clyde S. Kilby states, "It does not seem to me that this poem can be taken, except inversely, as an example of Browning's doctrine of elective affinities. The speaker here is arguing with some skeptical friend who knows that there is nothing in the glance from the woman."<sup>31</sup>

The speaker begins his monologue with a defiant statement indicating that if Cristina responded at all to his glance, it was only for a moment: "She should never have looked at me/ If she meant I should not love her!" (11.1-2, p.395). Nevertheless, he later affirms that Cristina, too, was aware that "Mine and her souls rushed together" (1.48, p.396), but he self-deceptively excuses her unresponsiveness when he says,

The world's honours, in derision,  
Trampled out the light for ever:  
Never fear but there's provision  
Of the devil's to quench knowledge  
Lest we walk the earth in rapture! (11.50-54, p.396)

Believing that he alone retains the effects of the moment, the speaker illustrates his jealous desire for possession of a woman who has given him perhaps only a flirtatious glance:

She has lost me, I have gained her;  
Her soul's mine: and thus, grown perfect,  
I shall pass my life's remainder. (11.58-60, p.397)

The speaker exposes his egotism, which is a common trait in Browning's jealous characters, in the first stanza when he states in a depreciating manner that he is not like other "men, you call such,/"





I suppose" (11.3-4, p.395). Therefore, his eccentric insistence that he possesses Cristina's soul may be an indication of and alleviation for a feeling of failure.

Porphyria's lover also demonstrates a feeling of failure in love in his dramatic monologue. However, the speaker of "Porphyria's Lover" is quite different from most of Browning's jealous characters, for his jealousy has driven him to madness. Although the speaker of "Too Late" portrays an abnormal state of mind and the King of "Instans Tyrannus" illustrates the madness of his actions against his subject, the former's mind does not seem to be as deranged as that of Porphyria's lover and the latter has overcome his madness with the recognition that God does not sanction his deeds. Porphyria's lover, like the cruel tyrant, describes events of the past; however, his mind remains deranged. The rapid movement of the monologue, the short phrases, and the concentrated attention upon detail betray the jealous speaker's aroused state of mind. His mood is reflected in his description of the "cheerless" grate and the "sullen" wind which "tore the elm-tops down for spite,/ and did its worse to vex the lake" (11.3-4, p.399). He too feels the spite and vexation of a rejected lover who, in the madness of jealousy, believes murder the only means of possessing Porphyria.

Thomas Blackburn describes the speaker as "a person whose insecurity, masked by an unfeeling hardness, cannot tolerate the independence of another human being."<sup>32</sup> Blackburn refers to a jealous desire for possession as "psychological vampirism," which



seeks for slavery and destroys relationship since it denies that separate personality which is an essential condition of dialogue and meeting. The logical conclusion of this desire for total possession is a species of necrophilia, intercourse of one kind<sup>33</sup> or another with a human who has been reduced to a thing.

Indeed, the speaker does assume total possession by rendering Porphyria helpless through strangulation. He reveals his intense need of her when he notes, near the beginning of his discourse, that he listened for her coming "with heart fit to break" (1.5, p.399). She, however, from the speaker's point of view, demonstrates no such need. After she has entered, he describes her actions of first closing the door, building a fire, removing her wet clothing, and finally acknowledging his presence: "And, last, she sat down by my side/ And called me" (11.14-15, p.399). The fact that he is hurt by the sequence of her actions is illustrated when he remarks, "When no voice replied,/ She put my arm about her waist" (11.15-16, p.399). He further reveals his feeling of failure and desire for possession when he scornfully blames her for never having expressed her love:

Too weak, for all her heart's endeavour,<sup>she</sup>  
To set its struggling passion free  
From pride, and vainer ties dissever,  
And give herself to me for ever. (11.21-25, p.399)

When he does believe in her love, he proclaims, "at last I knew/ Porphyria worshipped me" (11.32-33, p.399) and feels triumphant with his possession: "That moment she was mine, mine, fair,/ Perfectly pure and good" (11.36-37, p.400). Like the Duke of Ferrara, the speaker's jealous guarding of his love drives his actions to an extreme. He too renders the woman he loves into a state in which he alone has full control: "As Duke Ferrara's Duchess could satisfy





her husband's demands in a wife only by becoming a portrait for him, so Porphyria could be the woman required by her lover only by becoming a corpse." <sup>34</sup> The situation is finally reversed, for Porphyria is now dependent upon the speaker:

I propped her head up as before,  
Only, this time my shoulder bore  
Her head, which droops upon it still. (11.49-51, p.400)

In his madness, the speaker believes that he is eternalizing the moment of love; however, his act becomes a symbol for the destruction of love caused by a jealous desire for possession.

As is illustrated in A Blot in the 'Scutcheon, jealous guarding of a possession need not be confined to a love relationship. Earl Tresham's jealousy of the honour of his lineage is similar to the jealous guarding of tradition demonstrated in "Cleon" and in "The Flight of the Duchess." Certainly Cleon's jealous preservation of his tradition of reason is only a small part of the psychological complexity which he reveals; however, his jealousy explains one of the many "paradoxical tensions" within Cleon cited by Roma King. This tension is the "instinctive need for a revealed religion and inability to accept one." <sup>35</sup> Cleon fails to accept the Christian faith because such a faith cannot be accommodated by the reason which is evident throughout most of his epistolary discourse. King states,

On the surface, Cleon's discourse is rational and logical rather than imaginative and emotional; that of the philosopher. He states, elaborates, illustrates, and summarizes. Appropriately, his sentences are tightly and logically constructed, his syntax rarely admitting inversion or any other poetic dislocation. He avoids sudden shifts in thought, incoherences, asyntactical elements, ellipses, and exclamatory statements. <sup>36</sup>



However, King also states that "against these prosaic elements, Browning juxtaposes others of sensuous and emotional import." <sup>37</sup> Thus, through his speech, Cleon reveals that beneath the rational exterior remains a suppressed, emotional nature. The fact that Cleon craves the faith possible through Christianity is revealed when he expresses his fear of a death after which there is no hope for immortality of the soul:

I, I the feeling, thinking, acting man,  
The man who loved his life so over-much,  
Sleep in my urn. It is so horrible,  
I dare at times imagine to my need  
Some future state revealed to us by Zeus. (11.321-325,  
pp.749-750)

His reason will not allow him to accept his fantasy and thus he exclaims, "But no! Zeus has not yet revealed it; and alas,/ He must have done so, were it possible!" (11.333-335, p.750).

Christian teaching, however, has revealed an after-life, but Cleon's faith in reason, as well as in Greek tradition, ironically causes him to reject the teachings of Paulus. He remonstrates King Protus stating, "Thou wrongest our philosophy, O king,/ In stooping to inquire of such an one" (11.346-347, p.750) and ironically demonstrates the jealous pride which will keep him in despair:

I know not, nor am troubled much to know.  
Thou canst not think a mere barbarian Jew  
As Paulus proves to be, one circumcized,  
Hath access to a secret shut from us? (11.342-345, p.750)

Unlike "Cleon," "The Flight of the Duchess" does not expose the psychological complexities of its victims of jealousy but, like "In a Gondola" and "The Statue and the Bust," exposes the effects of jealousy. The reason for the incomplete treatment of the theme



of jealousy may be that "The Flight of the Duchess" is, as Roma King states, "neither a monologue nor a simple narrative" but "a special dramatic form required for the poem that Browning writes." <sup>38</sup>

Although a speaker is present and is necessary to the reader's understanding of the poem, his discourse does not revolve solely about himself but concentrates upon his narrative.

Whereas Cleon harms only himself through his jealous preservation of Greek tradition, the Duke and his mother gradually destroy the Duchess through their jealous adherence to medieval tradition. Although the Duke's reconstruction of a medieval estate is rendered ludicrous through its excesses, the inhumanity of the masquerade is exposed through its effects upon the Duchess. In contrast to the mother, who "Chilled in the rear, like a wind to a Nor'ward" (1.616, p.449), the Duchess

was active, stirring, all fire--  
 Could not rest, could not tire--  
 To a stone she might have given life! (11.174-176, p.449)

Her enthusiasm for life, however, is suppressed because, as the speaker reveals, the Duke maintains medieval customs "not for the joy's self, but the joy of his showing it, / Nor for the pride's self, but the pride of our seeing it" (11.114-115, p.447).

Accordingly, he requires that his wife serve only as ornamentation to perpetuate tradition:

And the Duke's plan admitted a wife, at most,  
 To meet his eye, with the other trophies,  
 Now outside the hall, now in it,  
 To sit thus, stand thus, see and be seen  
 At the proper place in the proper minute,  
 And die away the life between. (11.186-191, p.449)





Just as the oppressed Duchess invites comparison with the Duke of Ferrara's last wife, so the proud and egotistical Duke is much like the speaker of "My Last Duchess." When the narrator says that the Duke "stalked" with "such a solemn/ Unbending of the vertebral column!" (11.330-331, p.453), the reader is reminded of the Duke of Ferrara's statement, "I choose/ Never to stoop" (11.42-43, p.368). Like Ferrara's Duke, this man also places unjustified blame upon his wife when he cites the lady's "forwardness and ingratitude" (1.446, p.456) to the old Gypsy. As is typical of many of Browning's jealous men and women, the Duke is characterized by extreme self-centeredness, which is illustrated in his affected adherence to medieval tradition. His treatment of the Duchess also reflects his selfishness, for when she is ill, he remarks, " 'Tis done to spite me" (1.212, p.450); and after the Duchess has left the estate, the speaker notes that the Duke was glad, "For the wound in the Duke's pride rankled fiery" (1.814, p.465). Once the Duchess has gone, the Duke and his mother face no opposition to their jealous desire for total control and adherence to medieval customs.

In addition to describing the Duke's mother's jealous guarding of tradition, the speaker suggests that the old woman is also a victim of the third type of jealousy, jealous rivalry. Not attempting to conceal his hatred of "the sick tall yellow Duchess" (1.89, p.447), the speaker pictures her as a "mother-cat" (1.207, p.450) smelling "blood with a cat-like instinct" (1.314, p.453) and "licking her whiskers" (1.325, p.453) as she continually reprimands the young Duchess. Toward the end of the poem, the speaker intensifies the



evil image of the old Duchess when he states that she did not

die outright,  
As you expect, of suppressed spite,  
The natural end of every adder  
Not suffered to empty its poison-bladder. (11.808-811, p.465)

Thus, as in "Youth and Art," "A Light Woman," and "Too Late," animal imagery is associated with a jealous character. However, unlike the other jealous individuals, the old Duchess does not reveal her own character, which is presented only from the speaker's point of view. Nevertheless, the imagery is much harsher than that of the other three poems and therefore pictures most vividly the uncontrolled predatory and combative instinct of the jealous person.

Browning's concern with the specific theme of jealous rivalry, which receives particular emphasis in the dramas, is evident in the dramatic monologues, for all the poems which present jealous guarding or preservation, except "James Lee's Wife" and "Cleon," also suggest the presence of jealous rivalry. Andrea del Sarto, for example, repeatedly mentions his more successful rivals of whose ability to "Reach many a time a heaven that's shut to me" (1.84, p.675) he is jealous. He says of his paintings that "A common greyness silvers everything,--/ All in twilight" (11.35-36, p.673-674) and later repeats, "All is silver-grey/ Placid and perfect with my art: the worse!" (1.99, p.675). He thus ironically recognizes that he has failed as an artist because, unlike his successful rivals, he does not heed his own advice that "a man's reach should exceed his grasp" (1.97, p.675). The speakers of "Any Wife to Any Husband" and "Cristina" both express their jealousy of imagined rivals. Whereas the dying wife fears "the fresher faces" (1.67, p.592) which





will attract her husband, Cristina's admirer expresses his contempt for the men "she may discover/ All her soul to" (11.4-5, p.395). In "Porphyria's Lover," jealous rivalry does not exist between members of the same sex, but rather between the lovers themselves. Although the speaker cites no evidence of Porphyria's jealousy, he clearly demonstrates his own jealousy of her independence and dominant role in the relationship.

These poems illustrate that jealous rivalry can occur between men, between women, and between lovers. In Browning's other dramatic monologues dealing more specifically with jealous rivalry, such examples recur. "Artemis Prologizes" even demonstrates jealous rivalry between the gods and, like many other monologues, reveals the destructive effects of this passion. Artemis relates that through his devotion to her, Hippolutos "Neglected homage to another god" (1.18, p.384), and consequently Aphrodite, afflicted by jealousy, plans revenge:

Whence Aphrodite, by no midnight smoke  
Of tapers lulled, in jealousy despatched  
A noisome lust that, as the gadbee stings,  
Possessed his stepdame Phaidra for himself  
The son of Theseus her great absent spouse. (11.19-23, p.384)

Phaidra's death, which in turn incites Theseus' desire for vengeance, causes Hippolutos' murder and eventually, once the truth is revealed, Theseus' sorrow.

Like "Porphyria's Lover," "Artemis Prologizes" externalizes the destructive powers of jealousy. "Count Gismond," illustrating jealous rivalry between women, also pictures the cruel destruction caused by the cousins' jealous revenge. According to the speaker,



Count Gauthier's death is indirectly caused by her jealous cousins who instigated the false knight to proclaim her unchaste:

I thought they loved me, did me grace  
 To please themselves; 't was all their deed;  
 God makes, or fair or foul, our face;  
 If showing mine so caused to bleed  
 My cousins' hearts, they should have dropped  
 A word, and straight the play had stopped. (11.13-18, p.369)

The speaker, however, leaves some doubt as to the validity of her story, for she inexplicably lies to her husband at the end of her discourse and in the ninth stanza assures herself that she can proceed with her story because "Gismond's at the gate, in talk/ With his two boys" (11.48-49, p.370).<sup>o</sup> The Countess also associates images of light, suggesting truth, with Gauthier. For example, referring to the canopy, the scene of Gauthier's accusation, she says, "(a streak/ That pierced it, of the outside sun,/ Powdered with gold its gloom's soft dun)" (11.34-36, p.370). In relating Gauthier's challenge, she quotes his saying, " 'Bring torches!" (1.55, p.371), and near the end of her discourse she asks that "God lighten" (1.120, p.373) Gauthier's grave. In the last stanza, she re-creates the combat between Gauthier and Gismond, between truth and falsehood, when she notes that her older son, possibly Gauthier's child, "has got the clear/ Great brow" (11.121-122, p.373), whereas the younger son has the "black/ Full eye" which "shows scorn" (11.122-123, p.373). Even if the speaker is lying and has had a relationship with Gauthier, the suggestion that the cousins were jealous could be true, for they might have known about the situation and used it to gain revenge upon the future Countess Gismond.



The subtle internal destruction caused by jealousy is also illustrated in this dramatic monologue, for even if the reader cannot be certain of the cousins' jealousy, the speaker's jealousy of her cousins is suggested. Referring to her "beauteous" cousins,

Each a queen  
By virtue of her brow and breast;  
Not needing to be crowned, I mean,  
As I do. (11.19-22, pp.369-370),

the Countess Gismond exposes her own feeling of inadequacy, which she attributes to the fact that she is parentless:

Oh I think the cause  
Of much was, they forgot no crowd  
Makes up for parents in their shroud! (11.40-42, p.370)

This feeling of insecurity, which probably caused her jealousy, may account for her need to justify herself to Adela and perhaps even to justify her lying, with respect to Gauthier, to herself and thus motivates the entire monologue.

The speaker's lie to Count Gismond suggests that total trust and honesty are not implicit in the marital relationship. "A Woman's Last Word" also presents a moment destroying mutual respect, in this case through the jealous rivalry of husband and wife. The woman aptly applies bird imagery to picture the jealous rivals:

What so wild as words are?  
I and thou  
In debate, as birds are,  
Hawk on bough! (11.5-8, p.567)

In the third and fourth stanzas, she chooses animal imagery with a more evil connotation. She refers to "the creature stalking" (1.9, p.567) and the "serpent's tooth" (1.15, p.567) in the biblical context to symbolize the very base jealous nature in man which can





destroy the relationship between husband and wife.

The speaker pleads for peace, and in an effort to attain it, she proclaims total submission of "flesh and spirit" (1.31, p.568) to her husband; however, when the moment arrives, she is unable to surrender: "That shall be to-morrow/ Not to-night" (11.33-34, p.568). The speaker begins the monologue asking that the rivalling cease so that "All be as before" (1.3, p.567); but at the end, when she delays her surrender to "bury sorrow/ Out of sight" (11.35-36, p.568), she indicates that the relationship will not be exactly as before. Browning thus suggests that jealous rivalry causes a change in its victims, and the damaging effects of such change is illustrated in the poems "Before" and "After." The speaker of "Before" ardently endorses duelling, which is jealous rivalry at an extreme, as the solution to the rivalry between two men. He proclaims that the innocent man is victorious whether he lives or is killed, in which case he will "get his heaven" (1.28, p.680). The poem "After" presents the supposedly innocent survivor after he has killed his rival. Ironically, the duelling has not made him victorious, for he too suffers from the "surprise of change" (1.10, p.681) and also longs that "All be as before":

I would we were boys as of old  
           In the field, by the fold:  
 His outrage, God's patience, man's scorn  
           Were so easily borne! (11.13-16, p.681)

Each of the other dramatic monologues presenting jealous rivalry between men also illustrates the self-inflicted suffering of jealousy's victims. Caliban, for example, is a primitive



half-man who is jealous of a god whom he creates in his own image because, as John Howard points out, "the deities that he can comprehend are a reflection of his only means of awareness, which is shaped by the world around him."<sup>39</sup> Indeed, Caliban's very concrete descriptions and his choice of imagery illustrate his limited comprehension through sense-perception of his environment. He uses animal imagery frequently as when, for example, he describes the "snaky sea" (1.30, p.837), the sunbeams which "cross/ And recross till they weave a spider-web" (11.12-13, p.836), Setebos as "The many-handed as a cuttle-fish" (1.142, p.840), and himself as "This blinded beast" (1.181, p.841). In fact, his references to animals, if not always similes or metaphors, are so numerous that, through these images, Caliban conveys his own animal being. Howard also states that Caliban "can only appreciate spite, envy, vexing, and propitiation"<sup>40</sup>; therefore, his god Setebos, like himself, is characterized by these destructive traits.

Caliban creates his picture of Setebos by imagining himself as a god and then drawing analogies between his own behaviour and that of Setebos. For example, while harming and rewarding the helpless crabs, Caliban remarks, "As it likes me each time, I do: so He" (1.108, p.839). He similarly demonstrates his and Setebos' arbitrary actions when he "'Falls to make something" (1.192, p.811) and then says, "No use at all i' the work, for work's sake;/ 'Shall some day knock it down again: so He" (11.198-199, p.841). Caliban cites envy as the reason for his god's cruel and arbitrary demonstration of power and as a motivating force in creation:





But did, in envy, listlessness or sport,  
 Make what Himself would fain, in a manner, be--  
 Weaker in most points, stronger in a few,  
 Worthy, and yet mere playthings all the while,  
 Things he admires and mocks too, -- that is it. (11.60-64, p.838)

What Caliban interprets as envy, however, seems to be jealousy because of the intensity of the passion which he attributes to Setebos and the maliciousness expressed toward the rival creatures by the imagined god. If the god whom Caliban creates in his own likeness is jealous, then the speaker too unconsciously harbours this passion. Later, Caliban becomes more bold and states that Setebos "hath made things worthier than Himself,/ And envieth that" (11.112-113, p.839). Toward the end of his monologue, Caliban is so confident that he even reveals that Setebos can be appeased by his feigning envy:

Even so, 'would have Him misconceive, suppose  
 This Caliban strives hard and ails no less,  
 And always, above all else, envies Him. (11.263-265, p.843)

The end of the poem confirms that Caliban's jealousy of Setebos is not feigned, for the storm causes Caliban to express his fear of his god's anger and power and to promise repentance for his "fool's play, this prattling" (1.287, p.843).

"Caliban upon Setebos" illustrates particularly well Browning's awareness that jealousy is a very base passion which, as Philip Kalavros notes, can also be traced among animals.<sup>41</sup> However, this passion can afflict men possessing the most revered positions. "Instans Tyrannus," for example, reverses the situation of "Caliban upon Setebos" by revealing a powerful ruler's hatred aroused by the



tyrant's jealousy of a subject's ability to withstand his cruelty. The fact that this speaker is also an egotist is revealed through his first statement that he rules and possesses a "million or two" (1.1, p.609) and through the frequent use of "I" in his discourse. His egotistical nature then yields to jealousy when he witnesses his subject's inner strength, which the speaker does not possess.

The speaker is aware that his hatred is unreasonable, for he condescendingly states,

'no!' I admonished myself,  
'Is one mocked by an elf,  
'Is one baffled by toad or rat? (11.41-43, p.610)

He continues to characterize his imagined adversary with animal images when he repeats, "'Toad or rat vex the king?" (1.49, p.610), names the man's dwelling place as "his creep-hole" (1.54, p.610), and further humbles the subject by ascribing to him kinship with "the midge and the nit" (1.32, p.610). The King, however, ironically reveals his own very base animal instincts and nature through his choice of imagery. Instead of realizing his jealousy of the man's strength, he self-deceptively fabricates an excuse "To extinguish the man" (1.54, p.610) because "the small turns the great/ 'If it vexes you" (11.48-49, p.610). Like the Duke of Ferrara and Porphyria's lover, he too can "enjoy the event" (1.60, p.611) which will destroy the object of his jealousy. Unlike the former two speakers, however, this man comes to a realization of his own failure. Aware that his subject, who "Stood erect, caught at God's skirts, and prayed!" (1.71, p.611), has been saved from his vengeance, the King admits to his own weakness: "So, I was afraid!" (1.72, p.611).



The monk of "Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister" expresses as intense a hatred for his rival as does the jealous speaker of "Instans Tyrannus." For example, upon seeing his imagined opponent, he exclaims, "If hate killed men, Brother Lawrence,/ God's blood, would not mine kill you!" (11.3-4, p.374). The perverted monk, like the Duke of Ferrara, Porphyria's lover, and the cruel tyrant, indicates through his dramatic monologue that his hatred and malice have been caused by his jealousy of another person who succeeds through qualities which the speaker does not possess. In this case, the monk is jealous of Brother Lawrence's good nature and contentment with monastic life. As David Sanstroem states, "Brother Lawrence is constitutionally suited to the cloistered, Christian life, whereas the animal speaker finds it impossible to fit in. He observes Brother Lawrence's effortless success and hates him for it." <sup>42</sup>

Like Caliban, the speaker attempts to create Brother Lawrence in his own likeness; however, he unwittingly reveals that his rival is a sincere, if simple, man who loves nature and performs his duties with conviction and devotion. Addressing Brother Lawrence as "Swine Snout" (1.16, p.375) and "you swine" (1.72, p.376), the speaker, like the cruel tyrant, degrades his rival through association with animal images. However, as Sanstroem notes, "The bestial qualities pertain to himself [the speaker], and in the confusion of rage he merely projects his own traits upon the vegetable Brother Lawrence." <sup>43</sup> Perhaps the best evidence of the jealous speaker's predatory, animal nature is his opening and closing





remark, consisting simply of "GR-R-R." Unlike Brother Lawrence, the speaker emerges as an hypocritical ritualist whose interests lie outside the cloister. Although he self-righteously notes that he has adopted religious ritual by laying his knife and fork to form a cross and drinking his "watered orange-pulp" in three sips, the perverted monk unconsciously reveals his own sensuousness when he thinks of damning Brother Lawrence with his own "scrofulous French novel" (1.57, p.376) and when he recalls "brown Dolores" (1.25, p.375)

With Sanchicha, telling stories,  
Steeping tresses in the tank,  
Blue-black, lustrous, thick like horsehairs.(11.27-29, p.375)

The monk unwittingly exposes his jealousy and malice when he recounts his attempts to tarnish Brother Lawrence's reputation, and when, at the end of the dramatic monologue, he considers pledging his own soul to the devil in exchange for Brother Lawrence's destruction. The speaker's perversion of religious ritual enables him to believe that he can turn even a pact with Satan to his own advantage as he schemes to "leave/ Such a flaw in the indenture" (1.67, p.376) that he could still save his own soul.

The speaker of "The Bishop Orders his Tomb at Saint Praxed's Church" also reveals himself as an hypocritical formalist who loves the beauty of ritual and tradition. He too speaks within a religious setting and, like the jealous monk and almost all other jealous characters, exposes a self-centered nature. George Monteiro writes that "it can be said that the Bishop conceives of himself as an object worthy of worship,"<sup>44</sup> and Charles T. Phipps similarly states,



Always he [the Bishop] has striven to be the center of attention. Now as he lies dying, both his bed and his hoped-for tomb become in his distorted imaginings a kind of altar, with himself the center of worship.<sup>45</sup>

The Bishop's choice of imagery, which deifies him, portrays his self-centeredness. For example, he instructs his sons, "So, let the blue lump poise between my knees,/ Like God the Father's globe on both his hands" (11.47-48, p.434); later he identifies himself with Christ as he says, "Dying in state and by such slow degrees,/ I fold my arms as if they clasped a crook" (11.86-87, p.435); and at the end of his monologue he tells his sons who are leaving to "turn your backs/ --Ay, like departing altar-ministrants" (11.121-122, p.435).

Instead of contemplating the religious significance of death, the dying Bishop is ironically concerned with the beauty of his tomb which will remain as a symbol of his earthly status. Indeed, the self-centered speaker is not even willing to relinquish the pleasures of earthly life, for he expresses a wish to keep the spectacle of mass and communion before him after death:

And then how I shall lie through centuries,  
And hear the blessed mutter of the mass,  
And see God made and eaten all day long,  
And feel the steady candle-flame, and taste  
Good strong thick stupefying incense-smoke! (11.80-84, p.434)

This quotation illustrates the Bishop's sensuousness which, like his self-centeredness, is reflected in the imagery. Describing his lapis lazuli, he says that it is "Big as a Jew's head cut off at the nape,/ Blue as a vein o'er the Madonna's breast" (11.43-44, p.433); he orders the jasper for his tomb "pure green as a pistachio-nut" (1.71, p.434); and remembering his mistress, he





remarks that his sons' eyes "glitter like your mother's for my soul" (1.105, p.435). In accordance with his love of earthly pleasures, the Bishop admits to his scepticism of the soul's immortality when he says, "Man goeth to the grave, and where is he?" (1.52, p.434). Similarly, his Christianity has failed to give him an understanding of earthly life: "Life, how and what is it?" (1.10, p.433). His entire attitude toward life, as well as death, is based upon his self-centered desires which contradict Christian teachings. For example, he states that life is an illusion, that "the world's a dream" (1.9, p.433), and yet he has indulged in the sensual pleasures of the world. He recognizes that "Evil and brief hath been my pilgrimage" (1.101, p.435), and yet he does not pray for forgiveness. Instead, to ensure that his tomb will be magnificent, he proposes to pray to St. Praxed on behalf of his sons for "Horses for ye, and brown Greek manuscripts,/ And mistresses with great smooth marbly limbs" (11.74-75, p.434). Similarly, he states, "Peace, peace seems all./ Saint Praxed's ever was the church for peace" (11.13-14, p.433); but in the following statement, the Bishop destroys this peace: "I fought/ With tooth and nail to save my niche, ye know:/ --Old Gandolf cozened me, despite my care" (11.15-17, p.433).

This quotation introduces the Bishop's dead rival of whom the speaker is still jealous. Typically the self-centered speaker envisions the continuation of the rivalry and imagines himself triumphant even after his own death, "For Gandolf shall not choose but see and burst!" (1.50, p.434) when he is forced to view the



lump of lapis lazuli placed between the Bishop's knees. The speaker's jealousy is revealed throughout the dramatic monologue, for his primary concern is that his tomb be more beautiful and more impressive than that of Gandolf, which is "paltry onion-stone" (1.31, p.433). The jealous rivalry is the first and last thought which occupies his mind. After perfunctorily opening his discourse with "Vanity, saith the preacher, vanity!" (1.1, p.432) and after drawing his sons closer to his bed, the Bishop's first statement is, "She, men would have to be your mother once,/ Old Gandolf envied me, so fair she was!" (11.4-5, p.432). Similarly, he dismisses his sons and ends his discourse saying,

And leave me in my church, the church for peace,  
That I may watch at leisure if he leers--  
Old Gandolf, at me, from his onion-stone,  
As still he envied me, so fair she was! (11.122-125, p.435)

John Ruskin wrote that this dramatic monologue reveals the Renaissance spirit:

I know no other piece of modern English, prose or poetry, in which there is so much told, as in these lines, of the Renaissance spirit,--its worldliness, inconsistency, pride, hypocrisy, ignorance of itself, love of art, of luxury, and of good Latin. 46

Thus, the historical period may account, in part, for the Bishop's character; however, one must also consider the individual's psychological complexity and conclude that the Bishop's jealousy of his rival is also partly responsible for his self-deception. Self-deception is also evident in the speaker of "Pictor Ignotus." This dramatic monologue can be cited as a final example of jealous rivalry; however, the neglected painter's jealousy is not as



passionate as that of the cruel tyrant, the monk of the Spanish cloister, and the Bishop of Saint Praxed's Church. He is not proud, self-centered, or egotistical, but he too fails because he lacks self-awareness.

Roma A. King states,

His [the neglected painter's] conflict arises between his artist desires to embrace life joyfully and creatively and his monk fear to assert himself; between the painter's yen for man's approval and his fear that, loving the world more than heaven, he will lose God's; between his need for the world's praise and his fear of its abuse. 47

When the painter does resolve his conflict at the end of his monologue, the reader, who is aware of the difference between what the painter says and what he unconsciously means, realizes that the speaker has made the wrong choice. He repeatedly exposes his jealousy of his younger, more successful rivals as he defends his own ability. For example, he begins his dramatic monologue saying, "I could have painted pictures like that youth's/ Ye praise so" (11.1-2, p.415) and later reasserts,

And, like that youth ye praise so, all I saw  
Over the canvas could my hands have flung,  
Each face obedient to its passion's law,  
Each passion clear proclaimed without a tongue.  
(11.13-16, p.415)

He definitely yearns for the fame of his rivals, for he states, "Oh, thus to live, I and my picture, linked/ With love about, and praise, till life should end" (11.36-37, p.416). However, the promise of his ability remains unfulfilled because he rejects secular art, which is exposed to censure, in favour of his religious paintings protected by the "endless cloisters and eternal aisles"





(1.59, p.416) which "at least shall ward/ Vain tongues from where my pictures stand apart" (11.63-64, p.417). He is afraid of the world's abuse and thus convinces himself that he prefers his paintings to be neglected. Ironically, after he has made his decision, his thoughts return to the younger painters:

So, die my pictures! surely, gently die!  
 O youth, men praise so,--holds their praise its worth?  
 Blown harshly, keeps the trump its golden cry?  
 Tastes sweet the water with such specks of earth?  
 (11.69-72, p.417)

One suspects that even the neglected painter must unconsciously answer his rhetorical question affirmatively.

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Browning's treatment of the theme of jealousy in the dramatic monologues reveals a progression from most of the dramas in the poet's understanding of the passion. Whereas the stage dramas generally restrict the presentation of jealous characters to those of the nobility and governing classes, the dramatic monologues include the intellectual, as well as the social, elite. Despite his enduring interest in the theme of jealousy as related to characters elevated in their social and intellectual status, Browning does not neglect to study the passion in characters of more common rank. Browning's progression of interest in the theme of jealousy is thus evident in the dramatic monologues, which demonstrate that all human beings are susceptible to this passion. Browning presents a deeper understanding of the effects of the passion, for although he portrays characters like James Lee's Wife, who does not concede to her jealousy but does overcome it, he also studies those, like Andrea



the artist and Cleon the philosopher, who similarly do not recognize their jealousy but continue to delude themselves. In some of Browning's characters, the passion creates madness, as is exemplified in Porphyria's lover and the king of "Instans Tyrannus," who are deranged individuals whose jealousy motivates grotesque thoughts and actions. The dramatic monologues also demonstrate a progression from the stage dramas in their more effective use of imagery to describe the quality of an individual's jealousy, and of particular note is Browning's consistent development of animal imagery, introduced in the dramas, to illustrate the possible baseness of man's nature when he is a victim of jealousy.

Browning's frequent demonstration that the jealous character displays other passions in conjunction with his jealousy, that most jealous victims reveal characteristics common to other individuals similarly afflicted, and that jealous characters react to their situations in a similar manner is further evidence of a progression from the stage dramas in his treatment of the theme of jealousy. First, Browning demonstrates that love is the primary passion associated with jealousy, and indeed, modern psychologists state that love is the basis for all jealousy. Philip Kalavros, for example, notes that "jealousy always accompanies love" because "jealousy participates in all the instincts of possession."<sup>48</sup> Similarly, Robert Burton wrote in the seventeenth century that there can exist "No Love without a mixture of jealousy; who's not jealous loves not."<sup>49</sup> Each of the three types of jealousy revealed by Browning presents a form of love, whether this be the love of one person for another,





usually demonstrated by jealousy in love; the love for a possession, evident in jealous guarding or preservation; or the self-love shown by victims of jealous rivalry. Philip Kalavros' statement that "jealousy participates in all the instincts of possession" suggests that possessiveness is a second passion commonly associated with jealousy. Indeed, the Duke of Ferrara, James Lee's wife, the woman of "Any Wife to Any Husband," Andrea del Sarto, and Porphyria's lover are all examples of characters whose jealous guarding or preservation is associated with possessiveness. Hatred is a third passion which Browning presents in association with jealousy, and although this passion may characterize a person demonstrating jealousy in love, it is most evident in those characters engaged in jealous rivalry. For example, the ruler of "Instans Tyrannus," the monk of the Spanish cloister, and the Bishop of Saint Praxed's Church all vehemently proclaim their feelings of spite and malice toward their rivals.

Because these three individuals illustrate common characteristics, they are also examples of the second aspect of jealousy which Browning demonstrates. Each of these three speakers shows that he is self-centered and egotistical as he contemplates his own triumph through either the contemplated or direct destruction of his rival or the destruction of his rival's esteem. Self-centeredness and egotism also characterize the Duke of Ferrara and the Duke in "The Flight of the Duchess." Each proud Duke is content only after his wife, the unwilling object of his jealous guarding, has been removed from his estate. Not only is the Duke of Ferrara



self-centered, egotistical, and proud, but his subconscious awareness of his wife's goodness suggests that he feels inferior to her. Browning's understanding of this aspect of jealousy thus accords with the studies of modern psychology, for Kalavros states that jealous persons "drag along feelings of inferiority, are self-centered and egotistical."<sup>50</sup> In addition, he notes, "Jealousy, being an abnormal emotion, is always to be found with subjects marred by inferiority feelings."<sup>51</sup> Thus, the tyrannical ruler feels inferior to his subject whose inner strength enables him to survive the tyrant's vengeance, and the monk of the Spanish cloister feels inferior to Brother Lawrence who easily accepts and adjusts to monastic life. Although the unknown painter attempts to justify his ability, his refusal to produce secular art could suggest an unconscious feeling of inferiority to his rivals; and the speaker of "Any Wife to Any Husband" is similarly unsure of herself because she is unable to believe in her husband's fidelity. Self-pity is a fourth characteristic evident in Browning's jealous individuals. Again, the poet is supported by current psychological studies which state that "self-pity strips him [the jealous person] of contentment. ... The story of self-pity is written on his face."<sup>52</sup> Accordingly, the speaker of "Any Wife to Any Husband" pities herself because she believes that she must witness her husband's infidelity, James Lee's wife feels self-pity because her jealous love for her husband is not equally reciprocated, and the woman of "The Laboratory" feels such pity for herself that she deems only a slow, agonizing murder adequate revenge for the wrongs which she has suffered.



The third means by which Browning presents his interpretation of the passion of jealousy is through the creation of jealous characters reacting to their situations in similar ways. For example, Browning realized that

words and expressions are misunderstood, gestures or movements misinterpreted. The jealous one hears a treason in every innocent conversation, perceives a betrayal in a smile of politeness, imagines an already consummated embrace in the exchange of social graciousness. 53

The Duke of Ferrara is jealous because his wife smiled at all who passed, "her looks went everywhere" (1.24, p.368), and "all in each/ Would draw from her alike the approving speech" (11.29-30, p.368). The woman of "Any Wife to Any Husband" also believes that her husband's tendency to be unfaithful is in his nature:

And is it not the bitterer to think  
That, disengage our hands and thou wilt sink  
    Although thy love was love in very deed?  
I know that nature! Pass a festive day,  
Thou dost not throw its relic-flower away  
    Nor bid its music's loitering echo speed. (11.31-36, p.590)

The speaker of "Too Late," on the other hand, misconstrues Edith's death to mean that God sanctions the love between her and the speaker and similarly misinterprets the poet's actions as indications that he does not love his wife.

Browning was also aware that a victim of jealous rivalry reacts with malice to the happiness and success of his rival: "Jealous competition is like an illness. The sight of someone else being happy is painful to the jealous person, and it turns him away from ... achievement.... While one is thus infected, he is condemned to be the unhappy slave of the one he envies." 54 The Bishop of





Saint Praxed's Church, for example, is unhappy that Gandolf occupies the niche which the speaker wanted for his own tomb, and he is so concerned that his tomb be more magnificent than Gandolf's that he does not give thought to his own spiritual salvation. The speaker of "Instans Tyrannus" is so infuriated with his subject's strength in resisting his vengeance that he can think of nothing but his rival's destruction; and the monk similarly devotes all his energy to ruining Brother Lawrence's reputation. Like the monk, the Duke of Ferrara and the Duke in "The Flight of the Duchess" cannot tolerate their wives' innocent love of life; and the speaker of "Too Late" refuses to accept his rival's happiness with Edith and thus retaliates by degrading the relationship between the poet and his wife.

Although Browning presents in the dramatic monologues a complex and intricate study of the passion of jealousy, the dramatic monologue form was finally used to its greatest effectiveness through incorporation into a single long work. The Ring and the Book presents many dramatic monologues to expose the speakers; therefore, they are revealed not only through their own discourses, but also through the perceptions of other characters. Consequently, because of the different opinions of various speakers in one unified work, one finds even greater complexity and depth in Browning's presentation of the theme of jealousy in The Ring and the Book.



### Chapter III

#### The Ring and the Book

The Ring and the Book is often cited by scholars as Browning's finest achievement, and indeed, with regard to the theme of jealousy, the work does present the most complete and complex study of this passion. Although the dramatic monologues treat the theme superbly, The Ring and the Book heightens the treatment through an even greater unity imposed upon the twelve monologues. As Roma A. King states,

The monologues are brilliant fragments of one sweeping work that remains always just beyond man's powers to realize. Each is related to each, and all to some infinite Truth that defies apprehension. The Ring and the Book represents Browning's most sustained effort to relate the fragments by a common theme and action in a huge symbolic poem that expresses as nearly as art can the wholeness of his vision. <sup>1</sup>

Part of this Truth is the basic passion of jealousy, to which men and women of all social and intellectual classes are susceptible and which is demonstrated by five of the ten different speakers in The Ring and the Book.

As in the dramas and the dramatic monologues and even more effectively, The Ring and the Book exposes the passions associated with jealousy. Most notable are hatred, which is best exemplified by Guido, and love, which must be limited to self-love. Self-love implies a self-centered, egotistical nature, which is displayed by all the jealous characters of The Ring and the Book. As in the dramatic monologues, pride, a feeling of inferiority, and self-pity are additional characteristics shared by jealous individuals and,





again, most evident in Count Guido Franceschini. Guido, who represents the culmination of all of Browning's jealous characters, is a member of a declining aristocratic family. Tertium Quid, Archangeli, and Bottinius, all engaged in jealous rivalry, are also members of the upper classes, the first aspiring to the nobility and the latter two representing the law. Only the social position of Half-Rome, a victim of jealousy in love, is not explicitly determined. Thus, The Ring and the Book suggests an inverse chronological movement, for instead of proceeding from the dramatic monologues which study the passion at all social and intellectual levels, The Ring and the Book reverts to the early dramas which present jealousy almost exclusively in the nobility. However, this return to an early interest cannot be termed a regression in Browning's treatment of the theme, for the presence of jealousy in the upper social and intellectual classes is often, although not predominantly, demonstrated in the dramatic monologues. The Ring and the Book is a fulfillment of Browning's early concept of jealousy, not quite realized in the early dramas, just as the work in totality is, as Roma King notes, "the fulfillment of that adolescent dream which inspired Pauline but which at the time was beyond Browning's power to realize." <sup>2</sup>

In addition to presenting a progression, even beyond the dramatic monologues, in the demonstration of common passions and characteristics of jealous individuals, The Ring and the Book, because it is a single work, demonstrates a further progression in the use of integrated and recurring image patterns. Park Honan



notes Browning's progressive development in the use of imagery:

... Browning's use of imagery underwent a surprisingly steady development through the plays, successive works instancing richer and more subtle uses of dramatic imagery as a means of character portrayal. By the time of Pippa and Colombe the imagery had reached a remarkable stage of development; by then, its character-revealing potential well-explored, it could be used expertly and varyingly to aid in delineation. In the dramatic monologues one would expect to find continued evidence of this superb control--more certain evidence of Browning's conscious artistry in imagery than ever before, if anything. And so one really does. <sup>3</sup>

Referring specifically to animal imagery, Honan explains that the image patterns of The Ring and the Book are even more effective than those of the dramatic monologues could possibly be because, since "some of the same image subjects carry over from monologue to monologue, the imagery tends to operate in certain ways not paralleled in the independent monologues." <sup>4</sup> He continues to explain that "an animal image used by one speaker often helps to reveal his character partly through a contrast with the ways in which the same image-subject has been used before." <sup>5</sup> Thus, since The Ring and the Book is a single work, the same image-patterns employed by different speakers effectively reveal not only the speakers' judgements of the characters involved in the murder case, but also the speakers' own characters.

As in the dramas and dramatic monologues, animal imagery consistently characterizes the jealous individuals of The Ring and the Book, particularly Guido. The other jealous speakers often employ animal imagery to characterize Guido and so reveal their own impressions of the evil Count as well as their perhaps unconscious estimations of themselves. However, the major effect



of the animal imagery in The Ring and the Book is the presentation of the Franceschini family, particularly Guido, as cruel and predatory animals. Barton Friedman states,

The unwinding tale of Guido's treachery, Caponsacchi's heroism, and Pompilia's murder is underscored by a metaphorical substructure which strips the Franceschinis of their<sub>6</sub> humanity, exposing them as savage and demonic fiends.

Indeed, the dominant animal images applied to Guido are those of the wolf and the serpent, and because these images are so consistently employed, the imagery "forms a substructure of constant truth beneath the variant interpretations of Browning's speakers." <sup>7</sup>

Numerous other image patterns, besides the animal imagery, abound in The Ring and the Book. C. W. Smith suggests that a hierarchy of images can be traced in the poem:

At the top is the image of the-ring-and-the-book. Immediately subordinated to this general image are the dominant images of each of the twelve books. ... In the third rank in this hierarchy are scores of images, abundant in their variety, that show, when examined separately, a number of logical transformations or natural metamorphoses. <sup>8</sup>

However, a study of the animal imagery is most significant in revealing the characters of the jealous individuals in the poem. Gordon Thompson states that "the key images are those of wolves, snakes, dogs, sheep, and birds. These animals are consistently used to fortify the concepts of man's rapacity and innocence so crucial to the poem." <sup>9</sup> Associated with the animal imagery is the consistent use of Eden images and the Perseus-Andromeda myth with its counterpart, the St. George legend, because Guido can be





identified as the serpent in the former pattern of images and as the dragon or monster in the latter. However, as DeVane notes, with reference to the Perseus-Andromeda and St. George myths, only those speakers who judge Pompilia and Caponsacchi favourably picture Guido as the dragon;<sup>10</sup> and the "characters of evil import in The Ring and the Book use the same essential myth, but use it in a debased form for a base purpose."<sup>11</sup> All the jealous characters are, to varying degrees, "of evil import" and thus assign the roles of the myths to the participants in the murder case to suit their own selfish ends.

A study of the theme of jealousy in The Ring and the Book can thus be made by considering the individual monologues of the jealous speakers who reveal their characters through their judgments of the murder case and through their uses of animal imagery and their presentations of the Eden, Perseus-Andromeda, and St. George myths. Of the first triad of speakers, those who are not at all involved in the proceedings of the case, Half-Rome and Tertium Quid are examples of jealous speakers, the former portraying jealousy in love and the latter exemplifying, to a certain extent, jealous rivalry. Of the third triad of speakers, those who must pass judgement on the case, Archangeli and Bottinius are obviously jealous rivals. The two monologues of Count Guido Franceschini, the only jealous character in the second triad of speakers, can be considered last, for Guido is perhaps the most jealous, and consequently the most evil, of all of Browning's characters. He is the ultimate example of jealousy's destructive force wreaked not



only upon its victims, but also upon the victims' imagined adversaries. As in the dramas and the dramatic monologues, Browning emphasizes jealous rivalry in The Ring and the Book; however, of the five jealous speakers, only Guido is a victim of all three types of jealousy.

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Half-Rome, the first jealous speaker, presents a totally biased view, which completely distorts the truth. Although the speaker purports to present only facts, for he tells his auditor, "But facts are facts and flinch not" (II, 1.1049, p.60)<sup>12</sup> and ironically ascertains, "God knows I'll not prejudge the case" (II, 1.680, p.51), the poet affirms that Half-Rome's monologue is "The instinctive theorising whence a fact/ Looks to the eye as the eye likes the look" (I, 11.863-864, p.21). The reader is warned by the poet in the first book that the speaker's argument harbours "in the centre of its sense/ A hidden germ of failure" (I, 11.849-850, p.21), and the poet states,

the source of swerving, call  
Over-belief in Guido's right and wrong  
Rather than in Pompilia's wrong and right. (I, 11.859-861, p.21)

Indeed, "the source of swerving" is Half-Rome's jealousy in love, which he does not reveal until the end of his monologue when he mentions

a certain what's-his-name and jackanapes  
Somewhat too civil of eves with lute and song  
About a house here, where I keep a wife. (II, 11.1544-46, p.72)

Thus, throughout the entire monologue, the jealous speaker identifies himself with Guido, the duped husband, and attributes qualities and





characteristics to Guido which, he believes, he himself possesses.

Accordingly, Half-Rome does not reveal the Guido-Pompilia relationship but, as Donald Hair explains, "in telling the story Half-Rome reveals obliquely his own situation."<sup>13</sup> His dramatic monologue expresses only pity for Guido, whom he styles an "honest man" "And man of birth to boot" (II, 11.69-70, p.36), the "luckless" husband (II, 1.887, p.56), and "the injured man" (II, 1.1236, p.64). Half-Rome's defence rests on the assumption that Guido has been wronged by society, for "rougher hand and readier foot" (II, 1.309, p.42) prevented him from advancing in the Church; by the Comparini, particularly Violante who "spied her prey" (II, 1.321, p.42) in him; and by Pompilia, his supposedly unfaithful wife. The speaker stresses Guido's loss of honour by picturing him as the duped husband, "trooping after, piteously,/ Tail between legs" (II, 11.1061-62, p.60), with "the customary compliment/ Of cap and bells" (II, 11.886-7, p.56). Thus, the speaker feels that Guido's killing of Pompilia and the Comparini was justified because he had to save his honour.

Suggesting his own emotional state, Half-Rome further attributes Guido's actions to his jealousy. He mentions "the regular jealous-fit that's incident/ To all old husbands that wed brisk young wives" (II, 11.828-29, p.55) and marks that Guido's jealousy was augmented by the people's teasing, which was "enough to make a wise man mad" (II, 1.1262, p.65). Jealousy in love finally goaded Guido to action, contends Half-Rome, when he heard of the birth of "Guido's heir and Caponsacchi's son" (II, 1.1384, p.68). Remarking that "All five



soon somehow found themselves at Rome,/ At the villa door"  
 (II, 11.1401-02, p.68), Half-Rome does not make Guido responsible for the murder. Instead, Guido "Revenged his own wrong like a gentleman" (II, 1.1529, p.71). This statement clearly reflects Half-Rome's attitude toward his own situation, for he feels justified in taking action against his wife's lover, whom he threatens to whip. This threat displays his vehement hatred of his rival, a passion harboured by almost all of Browning's jealous characters. Referring to this threat, Donald Hair states,

In effect, the entire story is told, not as a piece of idle gossip, but as a warning: 'You, being his cousin, may go tell him so' (II 1547). Half-Rome, then, is fiercely involved in just the kind of world he portrays, a society where the crafty, the selfish, the worldly wise pursue their own vicious ways, where a measure of self-respect is gained only by preserving one's honour. 14

Because the self-centered Half-Rome is only concerned with his own situation, he is able to conclude cruelly that the murders are "The better for you and me and all the world,/ Husbands of wives, especially in Rome" (II, 11.1538-39, p.71).

In keeping with his own jealousy, Half-Rome, like Guido, consistently denounces and expresses hatred for Violante and Pompilia, who for him represent all women. For example, he refers to Violante as Pietro's scheming "bad wife" (II, 1.56, p.36) and derogatorily exclaims, "You know the sex like Guido's self./ Learn the Violante-nature!" (II, 11.532-33, p.47). Half-Rome's attitude toward the participants in the murder case and his consequent revelation of his own character are reflected in his



choice of imagery. Referring to the general pattern of sheep and wolf imagery in The Ring and the Book, Barton Friedman notes that Half-Rome "reverses the correspondences of sheep and wolf, making Guido's wife the bestial villain and her husband the blameless victim."<sup>15</sup> However, Half-Rome does not develop a single, sustained animal-image pattern. He applies many animal images to both Guido and Pompilia, who is notably presented as "the snake/ Pompilia" (II, 11.794-95, p.54) and appears "Viper-like, very difficult to slay" (II, 1.1445, p.69). Park Honan points out that

Guido and Pompilia are of little real significance in themselves for Half-Rome, as neither is focused with an intensity; he is not primarily interested in the moral implications of the murder or in the question of guilt on either side. His images are concentrated in their effect only in the case of Caponsacchi, who is labeled as a fox once, and then as a wolf no less than three times. Caponsacchi is Half-Rome's villain....<sup>16</sup>

Indeed, as Honan states, the animal imagery which reflects the speaker's jealousy "underlines Half-Rome's self-centeredness and perfect indifference to goodness or guilt--even justice--insofar as they do not impinge directly on the little circle of his own affairs."<sup>17</sup>

Caponsacchi also appears as villain in Half-Rome's Eden imagery:

The gallant, Caponsacchi, Lucifer  
I' the garden where Pompilia, Eve-like, lured  
Her Adam Guido to his fault and fall. (II, 11.167-69, p.39)

Later, Half-Rome reassigns the roles, associating Violante with Eve and Pietro with Adam (II, 11.253-54, p.41). The women, therefore, are consistently pictured as antagonists to men, a view which Half-Rome further confirms through his imagery of hunting, in which Violante is the hunter, Pompilia is the bait, and Guido is the prey.





For example, finding his "angler-simile" (1.322, p.42) useful, the speaker concludes that Guido was the unfortunate victim who was lured into marriage by Pompilia: "Such were the pinks and greys about the bait/ Persuaded Guido gulp down hook and all" (II, 11.342-43, p.43). Characteristically, Half-Rome thoroughly distorts the relationship between Pompilia and Caponsacchi by picturing Pompilia not only as bait capable of luring both Guido and the priest, but also as a temptress through his unheroic presentation of Pompilia as Helen and Caponsacchi as Paris:

Pompilia, soon looked Helen to the life,  
Recumbent upstairs in her pink and white,  
So, in the inn-yard, bold as 'twere Troy-town,  
There strutted Paris in correct costume,  
Cloak, cap and feather, no appointment missed,  
Even to a wicked-looking sword at side,  
He seemed to find and feel familiar at. (II, 11.1003-09, p.59)

Like the entire monologue, this image betrays Half-Rome's totally erroneous, self-centered judgement, which is based upon, and reflects, his own jealousy in love.

Tertium Quid's use of imagery, particularly animal imagery, notes Park Honan, "reveals his own character as one deprived of humanity through his attempts to dissociate himself from the commonality and mingle and identify himself with the Roman upper classes."<sup>18</sup> Although Tertium Quid does not express hatred and anger toward a particular rival, he exposes his jealous rivalry for social position through his monologue, calculated to ingratiate himself with the nobility. In the first book of The Ring and the Book, the poet prepares the reader for the monologue of Tertium Quid, "some man of quality" (I, 1.928, p.23) from the "superior social



section" (I, 1.927, p.23), "Courting the approbation of no mob,/ But Eminence This and All-Illustrious That" (I, 11.936-937, p.23). Accordingly, the speaker begins his monologue with a direct address acknowledging the eminence of his audience: "True, Excellency--as his Highness says..." (IV, 1.1, p.114). In a selfish effort to gain approval, he repeatedly names his prominent auditors to remind them that he is "Favoured with such an audience" (IV, 1.59, p.115). Before he fully proceeds with the display of his own supposed shrewdness, Tertium Quid even apologizes for his relating an "episode/ In burgess-life" (IV, 11.64-65, p.115). Thus begins his continual debasement of the lower social classes, "the mob," which is represented, for him, by the people whose acts he refuses to judge in his monologue.

For Tertium Quid, the Roman murder case is only to be considered as an opportunity for demonstrating his own supposed social and intellectual superiority; however, like Half-Rome, he is fully successful only in exposing his own brutal and insensitive nature. He makes no attempt to distinguish between Pompilia's goodness and innocence and Guido's evil. Instead, he pictures both as equally objectionable characters not worthy of his serious attention. This attitude is revealed in his choice of animal imagery, which does not clearly differentiate between Guido and Pompilia. Like Half-Rome, he pictures Pompilia as a worm, the Comparini's bait to lure Guido:

They baited their own hook to catch a fish  
With this poor worm, failed o' the prize, and then  
Sought how to unbait tackle, let worm float  
Or sink, amuse the monster while they 'scaped. (IV, 11.708-11, p.131)

Unlike Half-Rome, however, Tertium Quid does not picture Guido





as accepting the bait and thus implies that neither Guido nor Pompilia and the Comparini are innocent. Pompilia is similarly described as bait prepared by the Comparini when Tertium Quid refers to her as a "pet lamb" (IV, 1.665, p.130). Although he pictures her as "the rose above the dungheap" (IV, 1.247, p.120) and describes her as the "strange tall pale beautiful creature grown/ Lily-like out o' the cleft i' the sun-smit rock" (IV, 11.322-23, p.121), both images implying innocence and purity, Tertium Quid employs the images only to illustrate Pompilia's suitability as bait to lure Guido. That the speaker does not acknowledge Pompilia's innocence is further evident in his reference to her, through words which he attributes to Guido, as a "cur-cast mongrel" (IV, 1.611, p.128). Guido is similarly described as "a very cur" (IV, 1.1200, p.142), "an ignoble hound" (IV, 1.1206, p.143), and even as "the furious bull" (IV, 1.1559, p.151). Tertium Quid's inability or refusal to distinguish between good and evil thus demonstrates, as Park Honan states, that his "social striving has brutalized his own soul. Far from being, in truth, a refined and discriminating figure, he is blunt and bestial."<sup>19</sup>

Tertium Quid's reluctance to employ the imagery of Eden suggests that Pompilia has committed a sin greater than Eve's and thus illustrates his refusal to recognize Pompilia's innocence:

But then this is the wife's--Pompilia's tale--  
 Eve's...no, not Eve's, since Eve, to speak the truth,  
 Was hardly fallen (our candour might pronounce)  
 So much of paradisal nature, Eve's,  
 When simply saying in her own defence  
 "The serpent tempted me and I did eat."  
 Her daughters ever since prefer to urge  
 "Adam so starved me I was fain accept  
 "The apple any serpent pushed my way." (IV, 11.851-59, p.134)



This quotation also reflects his view of life that man, in this case Pompilia, is motivated only by self-interest. Donald Hair explains that, in Tertium Quid's concept of human relationships, "Profits are gained, however, only at the expense of the others, and consequently each party discovers that he has been cheated. Neither side can be blamed, for such is the way of the world."<sup>20</sup> Thus, Tertium Quid states that neither Guido nor the Comparini can hold each other responsible for the failure of their bargain, for "Each did give and did take the thing designed,/ The rank on this side and the cash on that" (IV, 11.529-30, p.126). Therefore, he concludes,

Who  
Was fool, who knave? Neither and both, pèrchance.  
There was a bargain mentally proposed  
On each side, straight and plain and fair enough.  
(IV, 11.506-09, p.126)

In accordance with his estimation of life, the speaker says of the Comparini, "The pair had nobody but themselves to blame,/ Being selfish beasts throughout, no less, no more" (IV, 11.701-02, p.131). Ironically, Tertium Quid proves through his monologue that he is also a "selfish beast," for all he says is calculated to elevate his own esteem. His entire monologue displays his self-centeredness, a characteristic typical of the jealous individual, and thereby suggests his approval of a life motivated solely by self-interest. As Donald Hair notes, according to Tertium Quid, "the crime of the Comparini is not that they pursued their self-interest, but that they did so openly, coarsely, and without taste."<sup>21</sup> Guido, on the other hand, is a member of a noble family and therefore executes "the finer vengeance" (IV, 1.769, p.132):



You see, the man was Aretine, had touch  
 O' the subtle air that breeds the subtle wit;  
 Was noble too, of old blood thrice-refined  
 That shrinks from clownish coarseness in disgust:  
 Allow that such an one may take revenge,  
 You don't expect he'll catch up stone and fling,  
 Or try cross-buttock, or whirl quarter-staff? (IV, 11.756-762,  
 p.132)

Tertium Quid, like Half-Rome, purports to being unbiased and fair in his assessment of the murder case, for he notes, "I simply take the facts, ask what they show." (IV, 1.1353, p.146) and pretends to consider all aspects of his argument; however, he does lean slightly in favour of the aristocratic Guido. Nevertheless, he refuses to make a moral judgement and thus pays deference to Guido's status only to flatter his aristocratic audience.

Like Half-Rome and Tertium Quid, the two jealous rivals, Archangeli and Bottinius, reveal their own self-centered and base natures in their dramatic monologues. Neither lawyer's defence makes any attempt to reach the truth, for each prepares his speech with the sole ambition of impressing his legal rival and the judges. As Roma King notes, "Both are occupied in achieving a legal victory when they should, for their own salvation, be concerned with human values." <sup>22</sup> In fact, Bottinius is so concerned with creating a favourable impression that, instead of defending Pompilia, he speaks of her with the greatest injustice. In Book XII, the monk relates through his sermon that the law has treated Pompilia most unjustly:

"The inadequacy and inaptitude  
 "Of that self-same machine, that very law  
 "Man vaunts, devised to dissipate the gloom,  
 "Rescue the drowning orb from calumny,  
 "--Hear law, appointed to defend the just,  
 "Submit, for best defence, that wickedness  
 "Was bred of flesh and innate with the bone





"Borne by Pompilia's spirit for a space,  
 "And no mere chance fault, passionate and brief.  
 (XII, ll.576-584, p.503)

Both lawyers claim consistently that the end justifies the means, a view that is reflected in their own defences of their clients. Philip Drew remarks that, for Archangeli and Bottinius, "winning the case justifies any means."<sup>23</sup> Consequently, they distort the truth to gain their own desired ends and "even where truth is an adequate defense, [the] lawyers resort to distortion."<sup>24</sup>

Although Archangeli is technically defending Guido, Bottinius also appears to favour the evil Count through his very inadequate defence which implies that Pompilia was guilty of adultery. The other two jealous characters also defend Guido, Half-Rome attributing total innocence to the Count and Tertium Quid leaning slightly in his favour. Similarly, all the jealous speakers, except for Tertium Quid, excuse Guido, in part or totally, on the assumption that his actions were motivated by jealousy. Half-Rome readily assigns his own role of jealous husband to Guido, and Bottinius similarly attributes Guido's actions to his jealousy of Caponsacchi: "Deserted by each charitable wave,/ Guido, left high and dry, shows jealous now!" (IX, ll.375-376, p.352). Ironically, Bottinius the bachelor offers a perceptive description of the effects of the passion upon a jealous lover:

Have I to teach my masters what effect  
 Hath jealousy and how, befooling men,  
 It makes false true, abuses eye and ear,  
 Turns the mist adamantine, loads with sound  
 Silence, and into void and vacancy  
 Crowds a whole phalanx of conspiring foes? (IX, ll.384-389, p.352)



Rather than presenting the Count as a jealous husband, Archangeli bases his argument upon the assumption that Guido was jealous of his honour:

Nor can revenge of injury done here  
To the honour proved the life and soul of us,  
Be too excessive, too extravagant. (VIII, 11.475-477, p.310)

Tertium Quid, on the other hand, claims that he is merely recounting reports of Guido's jealousy. For example, he notes that Guido's friends contend that Pompilia

herself from first to last  
Attributes all the so-styled torture just  
To jealousy,--jealousy of whom but just  
This very Caponsacchi! (IV, 11.912-915, p.136)

Similarly, speaking for Caponsacchi, Tertium Quid states that the priest "Heard everywhere report she suffered much/ From a jealous husband thrice her age" (IV, 11.981-2, p.137). Consequently, All these speakers, presumably unaware of their own jealousy, recognize the passion in Guido, and most of them even excuse his actions on the assumption that they were motivated by jealousy. Each speaker is, therefore, unconsciously excusing his own base actions motivated, in part, by his own jealousy.

In contending that Guido's actions are justified because they were perpetrated to preserve his honour, Archangeli is betraying his own motive in his defence of Guido. Like Tertium Quid, he is not interested in the truth of this, as he says, "huge, this hurly-burly case" (VIII, 1.106, p.301), but rather wishes to retain and augment his own honour through an argument calculated to impress the judges and his rival. Donald Hair states,





The case is, for him, an exercise in mental agility, and is made out with an eye, not to the persons involved in it, but to his legal rival, the judges, etc. He is not involved in the case morally or emotionally. It is simply an intellectual problem that is to be shaped into a virtuoso legal performance. 25

Archangeli reveals in his postscript to Cencini that his fame and honour were his sole concern, because his only lament is for his own failure: "Much good I get by my superb defence!" (XII, 1.304, p.496). Even in his monologue, he notes that his "brisk career" is "A source of honest profit and good fame" (VIII, 1.53, p.300), and thus his stress on the importance of honour, as it relates to Guido, merely reflects his excessive concern with his own fame and honour.

"Honour," he proclaims as part of his defence, "is a gift of God to man/ Precious beyond compare" (VIII, 11.458-59, p.310) and "is the supreme good" (VIII, 1.583, p.313). As does Guido in Book V, Archangeli ironically compares his client with Christ:

but when He found Himself  
Touched in His honour never so little for once,  
Then outbroke indignation pent before-- (VIII, 11.661-63, p.315)

Archangeli, however, is not concerned with Guido's honour, but rather with his own esteem. Like Tertium Quid, he plans to gain the favour of his auditors and, therefore, in preparing his case, he compliments his hearers on their sagacity (VIII, 1.932, p.321) and later cynically notes to himself,

you have to plead before these priests  
And poke at them with Scripture, or you pass  
For heathen and, what's worse, for ignorant  
O' the quality o' the Court and what it likes  
By way of illustration of the law. (VIII, 11.1736-40, p.340)

Not only must the judges be flattered, but Bottinius, his rival,



must be conquered. Before beginning to construct his defence, Archangeli vows, "We'll beat you, my Bottinius, all for love,/ All for our tribute to Cinotto's day!" (VIII, 1.97, p.301). He consistently anticipates Bottinius' reactions to his arguments and at one point interrupts his work to consider Bottinius' preparation of his case:

Confound the fop--he's now at work like me:  
Enter his study, as I seem to do,  
Hear him read out his writing to himself!  
I know he writes as if he spoke: I hear  
The hoarse shrill throat, see shut eyes, neck shot-forth,  
--I see him strain on tiptoe, soar and pour  
Eloquence out, nor stay nor stint at all--  
Perorate in the air, and so, to press  
With the product! (VIII, 11.234-42, pp.304-05)

Even after Archangeli has failed in his defence, he writes to Cencini that he looks forward to defeating Bottinius in "the marriage case" (XII, 1.363, p.497),

"Success with which shall plaster aught of pate  
"That's broken in me by Bottini's flail,  
"And bruise his own, belike, that wags and brags.  
(XII, 11.364-66, pp.497-98)

Since Archangeli is concerned primarily with his own success, he, like Tertium Quid, voices no definite judgement on the murder case. He notes that Guido has confessed under torture to the murder and states that his sole concern, therefore, is "to simply find excuse,/ Occisorem, for who did the killing-work" (VIII, 11.448-9, p.309). Consequently, for the jealous Archangeli, who consistently expresses hatred for his rival, the only villain is Bottinius. This attitude is reflected in the animal imagery which is most notably employed to describe the Fisc rather than the participants in the murder case. Bottinius is pictured as "fine/



As pale-haired red-eyed ferret which pretends/ 'Tis ermine, pure soft snow from tail to snout" (VIII, 11.225-26, p.304); and while thinking of his rival, Archangeli vehemently asks, "Do you suppose that I didn't see the beast?" (VIII, 1.230, p.304). Similarly, anticipating his own triumph at the end of his monologue, Archangeli exclaims, "Bottini, burn your books, you blazing ass!" (VIII, 1.1804, p.342). Park Honan writes that Guido, on the other hand, is described "alternately as a bird, a beast, an insect, a bee, and an elephant. The utter incongruity of these images suggests the extent to which Archangeli appreciates the nature of evil when it looms before his eyes." <sup>26</sup> Thus, like Tertium Quid, he fails to distinguish between the good and evil of Pompilia and Guido, respectively, because "people, the law, Pompilia, are significant to the advocate only as they are able to contribute to his own well-being and bodily satisfaction. Justice is unimportant." <sup>27</sup>

Archangeli's excessive concern for his own well-being, and consequently his concern for his honour and esteem, are reflected in his constant interruption of his work to think of his son and of the evening feast. Indeed, he refers to the feast so often that he even envisions his legal argument in terms of food images:

The while we spread him fine and toss him flat  
This pulp that makes the pancake, trim our mass  
Of matter into Argument the First. (VIII, 11.66-68, p.300)

He similarly remarks, " 'Law is the pork-substratum of the fry,/ 'Goose-foot and cock's-comb are Latinity,' --" (VIII, 11.152-53, p.302). This quotation reflects what Park Honan terms the "surprising and comic turn" in Archangeli's use of animal imagery,





for "more animals are mentioned in terms of food than in terms which relate them to the attributes of other characters." <sup>28</sup> Rather than employing animal imagery to picture his concept of the good and innocent as opposed to the evil and guilty characters involved in the murder case, Archangeli uses the imagery for his own selfish purposes. Only Bottinius is pictured in terms of animal imagery which consistently characterizes him as the villain. Thus, Archangeli emerges through his choice of imagery as a jealous rival who is characteristically self-centered, egotistical, and indifferent to people and events which do not immediately concern him and his family.

Archangeli's estimation of Bottinius as a villainous adversary is certainly an accurate description of the Fisc's relationship to Pompilia. Although the purpose of Bottinius' defence is supposedly to support Pompilia and, as the poet ironically states, "With special end to prove Pompilia pure" (I, 1.1208, p.30), he actually makes her appear morally guilty. Like Archangeli, he is not concerned with determining truth but only with defeating his legal rival. Unlike Archangeli, who expresses affection for his wife and son, Bottinius has, as Roma King states, "little to redeem him. Beneath his lawyer facade there is, so far as we can see, only vacuity. He remains the arid bachelor, incapable of self-awareness and affection." <sup>29</sup> The only type of affection of which he seems capable is self-love, a common characteristic of jealous individuals, for he is motivated not by a determination to prove Pompilia's innocence, but solely by the desire to enhance his own reputation and esteem. Although he reveals his self-centeredness throughout his monologue,



the final proof of his jealous rivalry, of his total commitment to his own interests, occurs in his letter, quoted in Book XII, in which he states that he will prove Pompilia guilty to enable the monastery of the Convertites to claim her wealth:

Who but I institute procedure next  
Against the person of dishonest life,  
Pompilia, whom last week I sainted so? (XII, 11.704-06, p.506)

Indeed, the Fisc is, as the poet explains, "Pompilia's patron by the chance of the hour,/ To-morrow her persecutor" (I, 11.1173-74, p.29).

Donald Hair says of the Fisc's argument that

where Archangeli cultivates refinement of style,  
Bottini makes use of a highly ornamented rhetoric that  
is often as involved as his argument itself. Consequently  
the moral indifference of his monologue lies in the  
manner as much as the matter. 30

Bottinius, in fact, emphasizes the manner of his argument over the matter in his effort to gain a victory. Beginning his monologue, Bottinius thinks first not of Pompilia and her fate but rather of himself. His only lament is that he will not be able to deliver his speech, for it must be submitted in written form. He consequently consoles himself by imagining the "buzz of expectation" which will greet his entrance: "I rise, I bend, I look about me, pause/ O'er the hushed multitude: I count-One, two-" (IX, 11.15-16, p.343). Not being able to impress his auditors with the manner of his personal presentation, Bottinius concentrates upon the manner of his argument: "Anything," he pronounces, "anything to let the wheels/ Of argument run glibly to their goal!" (IX, 11.471-72, p.354). Thus, like Archangeli, he contends that the end justifies





the means and, therefore, similarly bases his argument on the contention that Pompilia's actions are justifiable because they proved a means of escape from Guido:

Enough was the escape from death, I hope,  
To legalise the means illicit else  
Of feigned love, false allurement, fancied fact.  
(IX, 11.524-26, p.355)

Like Tertium Quid, Bottinius misinterprets Pompilia's motive for escape as self-interest:

Rebellion, say I?--rather, self-defence,  
Laudable wish to live and see good days,  
Pricks our Pompilia on to fly the foe  
By any means, at any price,-- (IX, 11.412-15, p.353)

Instead of proving her innocence, the insensitive and self-centered Bottinius plans his own legal victory by conceding that Pompilia is guilty of the charges made against her. As Philip Drew notes, the satire here

is thus more telling than in Book VIII, for it implies that even when a lawyer is bending his mind intently on his brief and even when he is by chance on the right side, the last thing that he will be concerned with is actually establishing the truth. 31

In accordance with his own interests, Bottinius bases his argument on a series of false assumptions of Pompilia's guilt. Although he proclaims that these assumptions are fiction, he, nevertheless, justifies Pompilia's drugging Guido, stealing his money, and enticing Caponsacchi. Instead of recognizing Pompilia's pure, spiritual love for Caponsacchi, Bottinius debases her by insisting that her capacity to allure is natural for a woman and a means of escape and, therefore, justifiable:



Grant she somewhat plied  
 Arts that allure, the magic nod and wink,  
 The witchery of gesture, spell of word,  
 Whereby the likelier to enlist this friend,  
 Yet stranger, as a champion on her side? (IX, 11.435-39, p.353)

Because of Bottinius' tendency, like that of Half-Rome, to categorize Pompilia as a representative of all womanhood, Jerome Wyant states that "his major defect lies in his failure to respect the integrity of the individual personality. He maligns the human soul by his incessant categorizations of it. He cannot--or is indisposed to--see it in the singular." <sup>32</sup>

Bottinius' depersonalized and unjust attitude toward Pompilia is reflected in his use of imagery. For example, he identifies Pompilia with the image of the lamb, not to suggest the innocence which the image conventionally implies, but to characterize her as a representative of female guiles:

Know one, you know all  
 Manners of maidenhood: mere maiden she.  
 And since all lambs are like in more than fleece,  
 Prepare to find that, lamb-like, she too frisks--  
 O' the weaker sex, my lords, the weaker sex! (IX, 11.221-25,  
 p.348)

He further emphasizes Pompilia's possession of innate female knowledge by comparing her with Eve after the fall:

Yet, at the Serpent's word, Eve plucks and eats  
 And knows--especially how to read and write:  
 And so Pompilia. (IX, 11.451-53, p.354)

Pompilia's capability of deceiving is stressed by Bottinius, who thus denies any suggestion of her innocence, through his own version of the Perseus-Andromeda myth:

"I look that, white and perfect to the end,  
 "She wait till Jove despatch some demigod;  
 "Not that,--impatient of celestial club



"Alcmena's son should brandish at the beast,--  
 "She daub, disguise her dainty limbs with pitch,  
 "And so elude the purblind monster! (IX, 11.971-76, p.366)

Bottinius' most malicious use of imagery, however, occurs toward the end of his argument when he again wishes to illustrate Pompilia's deceit by applying the image of the eel, a most suitable image for himself, to Pompilia:

And, wily as an eel that stirs the mud  
 Thick overhead, so baffling spearman's thrust,  
 She, while he stabbed her, simulated death.  
 (IX, 11.1417-19, p.377)

Referring to this use of the eel image, W. D. Shaw notes that it adequately represents the reason for the Fisc's erroneous portrait of Pompilia, for his "error lies in remaking Pompilia in his own image." 33

Like Archangeli, Bottinius does not employ imagery to distinguish between Guido's evil and Pompilia's goodness and innocence. Instead, he uses animal imagery and the imagery of Eden and of the Perseus-Andromeda myth, which suggest that Pompilia is morally, if not legally, guilty. As with his manner of argument, the jealous Bottinius selects his images to suit his own purpose, which is to defeat his rival by means of a legal victory. Like Archangeli, therefore, Bottinius recognizes only his rival, whom he terms a glutton and the "Archangelic swine" (IX, 1.947, p.365), as the villain.

Bottinius fails to perceive the truth because, like the other jealous characters, he is blinded by self-interest. Half-Rome, Tertium Quid, Archangeli, and Bottinius are all characterized by





their self-centered, egotistical, and proud natures. All, except Tertium Quid, express hatred for their rivals, Half-Rome vehemently threatening his wife's lover and the rivalling lawyers denouncing each other as villains. None of these characters, however, as far as the reader can perceive, allows his hatred, aroused by jealousy, to motivate the physical destruction of his opponent. Porphyria's lover, the King of "Instans Tyrannus," and the Duke of Ferrara are examples of jealous characters from the dramatic monologues, each of whom is driven to the attempted or successful destruction of his imagined rival. Browning's interest in the destructive powers of jealousy has not, however, waned in The Ring and the Book. Count Guido Franceschini represents the culmination of all of Browning's jealous characters, of whom Guido is the only one who is allotted two dramatic monologues by the poet. Thus, not only do the other speakers of The Ring and the Book reveal his consummate evil through their judgements of the Count and through the conscious and unconscious meanings conveyed by their imagery, but Guido himself unmasks his evil nature in Book XI, his second desperate monologue. Indeed, as W. D. Shaw notes, "Count Guido, the villain of the piece, is a Duke of Ferrara on a gigantic scale." <sup>34</sup>

Guido's two dramatic monologues differ greatly. In the first, entitled "Count Guido Franceschini," the speaker wears the mask of nobility and fabricates an elaborate defence for his treatment and murder of Pompilia and the Comparini. In his second monologue, simply and appropriately entitled "Guido," he confronts himself and so emerges as a man and reveals his real nature to himself, to his



auditors, and to the reader. Roy Gridley states, "In Book XI Guido is still a murderer, but he is not a conscious liar. Here he makes an honest attempt to define himself to himself."<sup>35</sup> Referring to Guido's first monologue, the poet notes that the Count "does his best man's-service for himself" (I, 1.977, p.24); however, in Book XI, "the true words come last" from "the same man, another voice" (I, 11.1281 & 1285, p.31). Part of the truth which emerges in Book XI is the confirmation of Guido's jealousy, particularly of his jealous rivalry, which he unintentionally portrays in his first dramatic monologue. Book XI, however, also confirms that Guido's jealousy in love, to which he resorts frequently as a basis for his defence in Book V, is not as passionate as he had pretended in his appearance before the judges.

In Book V, Guido's method of argument appears very similar to that of the other jealous rivals portrayed in the poem. Like *Tertium Quid*, *Archangeli*, and *Bottinius*, he hopes to gain the favour of his auditors by presenting a well-planned, logical, and coherent defence. He too attempts to ingratiate himself with the judges when, for example, he addresses "the reverend Court" (V, 1.95, p.156) and the "sweet lords" (V, 1.323, p.161), and even attributes his own reasoning to the judges: "Reasoned like yourself!" (V, 1.472, p.165). Although, like the Duke of Ferrara, he pleads that he is not adept at speech, for he notes that *Caponsacchi*'s speech is "florid prose/ As smooth as mine is rough" (V, 11.1694-95, p.194), he attempts through his monologue to transform himself into an innocent victim. As Roy Gridley notes, "Count Guido in Book V has control of his language at all times, using it as a discursive rhetorical instrument





to prove, casuistically, that his treatment and eventual murder of Pompilia and the Comparini were justified." <sup>36</sup>

In accordance with his aim of gaining the judges' sympathy and pity, Guido appears before the court in mock humility. Attempting to convey his innocence and undue suffering, he absurdly compares himself with the crucified Christ: "...why, 'tis wine,/ Velletri,-- and not vinegar and gall" (V, 11.4-5, p.154). Similarly, he later stresses his poverty by stating, "We become poor as Francis or our Lord" (V, 1.164, p.158). This feigned humility, however, harbours some truth in that it suggests Guido's sense of failure and inferiority, feelings which characterized him even before he encountered the Comparini and Pompilia. His sense of failure accounts for his jealous rivalry, for he regards the Comparini, Pompilia, and Caponsacchi as individuals who have added to his humiliation by further defeating him. Roma King offers a statement which explains how Guido's jealousy of these individuals has been aroused: "The Cardinal and the Abate, Pietro and Violante, Pompilia and Caponsacchi symbolically represent partly what Guido is or, more often, what he wants to be, thus creating tension within him." <sup>37</sup>

Guido reveals that he was engaged in jealous rivalry during most of his life, for he relates not only his poverty, but also his failure to advance in the Church:

I waited thirty years, may it please the Court:  
Saw meanwhile many a denizen o' the dung  
Hop, skip, jump o'er my shoulder, make him wings  
And fly aloft,--succeed, in the usual phrase.  
(V, 11.292-295, p.161)

After a long lament over his failure, he describes his decision to



marry for the sole purpose of perpetuating the noble Franceschini line. Marriage, for Guido, represents a means of alleviating his failure in life and is, therefore, cynically portrayed as a mere bargain:

I paid down all engaged for, to a doit,  
Delivered them just that which, their life long,  
They hungered in the hearts of them to gain--  
Incorporation with nobility thus  
In word and deed: for that they gave me wealth.  
(V, 11.512-16, p.166)

Despite this attitude toward his marriage, Guido constantly excuses himself on the assumption that he was a jealous husband. He thus chronologically relates all the events which, he claims, aroused his jealousy in love. He first claims to have been maddened by Pompilia's wandering glances, which finally attracted the attention of Caponsacchi:

That still Pompilia needs must find herself  
Launching her looks forth, letting looks reply  
As arrows to a challenge; on all sides  
Ever new contribution to her lap,  
Till one day, what is it knocks at my clenched teeth  
But the cup full, curse-collected all for me?  
(V, 11.899-904, p.175)

Next, he feigns the duped husband, pretending that he is the last to learn of an affair between his wife and the priest. Supposedly quoting his servants, he states,

"Did not you know? Why, we all knew, you see!"  
And presently, bit by bit, the full and true  
Particulars of the tale were volunteered  
With all the breathless zeal of friendship--  
(V, 11.1008-11, p.177)

Guido continues to describe the further arousal of his jealousy in love when he relates his discovery of Pompilia and Caponsacchi,



"Two avowed lovers forcibly torn apart" (V, 1.1128, p.180), at the inn and when he notes that he suspected, after the ensuing trial and Pompilia's release from the monastery of the Convertites, that Caponsacchi might seek "a certain villa smothered up in vines" (V, 1.1335, p.185), " 'Betake himself and whence ride back, some morn,/ 'Nobody the wiser" (V, 11.1340-41, p.185). Guido's final suggestion of his jealousy in love occurs when he describes the birth of Pompilia's son and questions, "Is he indeed my flesh and blood, this babe?" (V, 1.1507, p.189). He thus claims justification for the heinous murders on the assumption that he was motivated by jealousy in love, as well as by the need to save his honour and his noble lineage: "I did/ God's bidding and man's duty, so, breathe free" (V, 11.1702-03, p.194).

Since Guido's sole purpose in his monologue in Book V is to defend himself, one must question the truth of his jealousy in love. According to the monologues of Pompilia, Caponsacchi, and the Pope, Pompilia could not write and, therefore, the letters supposedly written by her to the priest were forged by Guido. The Count, not able to drive Pompilia away through his torturous treatment, thus schemed to create an affair between Caponsacchi and his wife, who would then appear morally guilty while Guido himself would seem innocent. Being successful to the extent that Pompilia does eventually enlist Caponsacchi's aid in escaping, Guido pleads on behalf of his jealousy in love. Guido's jealousy in love thus appears to be a fabrication; however, one cannot totally discount his claim to such jealousy. As Roma King explains, Guido's





disturbed mind could eventually lead him to believe that he is a duped husband. He thereby subconsciously alleviates his fear of inadequacy or failure as a lover because he can blame a rival for luring Pompilia away from him:

Guido's fears render plausible to his disturbed mind his accusation against Pompilia and Caponsacchi. He dwells upon their imagined relation with ambivalent torture and pleasure. He would rather believe Pompilia's disinterest in him to come from her love for another than from his inability. His fears illuminate the violent seizures and shameless violations of which she complains. His fears also explain his attitude toward the child. His birth moves Guido to greater violence than any other incident. He is torn between desire for an heir and doubt of his son's legitimacy. The latter triumphs and the baby assumes the focus of his hate. 38

Guido's claim in Book XI, in which the Count exposes his real self, that he was a jealous husband lends support to King's statement:

Allow then, were no one point strictly true,  
There's that i' the tale might seem like truth at least  
To the unlucky husband,--jaundiced patch,--  
Jealousy maddens people, why not him?  
Say, he was maddened, so, forgivable!  
Humanity pleads that though the wife were true,  
The priest true, and the pair of liars true,  
They might seem false to one man in the world!  
(XI, 11.882-89, pp.452-53)

Despite Guido's confirmation that he was a jealous husband, the hatred which he expresses for Pompilia in both monologues suggests that he is suffering not so much from jealousy in love as from a jealous desire for possession. Although he schemes to drive Pompilia away, he feels the failure of his power over her when she finally does escape. Like Porphyria's lover and the Duke of Ferrara, Guido wishes to reduce the beloved to an object which, within his power, alleviates his feelings of inferiority and failure.



Although Guido does eventually believe that he is a jealous husband, he does not directly admit to his jealous rivalry, the real cause of his madness. As Roma King states, Guido regards Pompilia as a rival "because she is good and he is evil and also because she reminds him of his bitterest failure." <sup>39</sup> His "bitterest failure" is his age, undistinguished by success, which he reveals when he quotes "friends": " 'The fact is you are forty-five years old,/ 'Nor very comely even for that age" (V, 11.586-87, p.167). Guido consistently claims that Pompilia failed in her obligations as a wife. For example, he notes that she "refused from the beginning day/ Either in body or soul to cleave to mine" (V, 11.608-09, p.168); however, his complaints about Pompilia's supposed failure merely reflect his fear of his own inadequacy as a desirable husband. In Book XI, he finally reveals the real reason for his hatred of Pompilia:

But myself am old,  
O' the wane at least, in all things: what do you say  
To her who frankly thus confirms my doubt?  
I am past the prime, I scare the woman-world,  
Done-with that way: you like this piece of news?  
(XI, 11.997-1001, p.455)

By failing to fulfill their obligations in the bargain, the Comparini also remind Guido of his failure in life. Roma King explains that

Guido hates the Comparini less because they are ignorant, vulgar, grasping, and dishonest than because they too remind him of failure. It is galling to be surpassed by equals but intolerable to be defeated by inferiors. When they make him the laughingstock of Rome, he turns upon them with a violence near madness. <sup>40</sup>





Similarly, Caponsacchi, who was originally chosen by the scheming Guido to become Pompilia's lover, attracts the Count's hatred because he appears to Guido's disturbed mind "as the man-lover he [Guido] would like to be." <sup>41</sup>

In addition to stating that he was a jealous husband, Guido betrays his rivalling nature in Book XI, to a greater extent than in Book V, as he exposes his fear of his unsuccess:

For unsuccess; explain it how you will,  
Disqualifies you, makes you doubt yourself,  
--Much more, is found decisive by your friends.  
Beside, am I not fifty years of age?  
What new leap would a life take, checked like mine  
I' the spring at outset? Where's my second chance?  
(XI, 11.1839-44, p.475)

Like Browning's jealous characters in the dramas and in the dramatic monologues and like Half-Rome, Archangeli, and Bottinius, Guido employs animal imagery to characterize his hated rivals. Caponsacchi, for example, is "this new gad-fly" (V, 1.912, p.175), and the Comparini, particularly Violante, are associated with serpents and correspondingly, the devil. For example, referring to the night of the murder, Guido states that he first encountered Violante: "I had stumbled, first thing, on the serpent's head/ Coiled with a leer at foot of it" (V, 11.1659-60, p.193). He retains this imagery in Book XI when he pictures his slaying of the Comparini:

I rather see the griesly lion belch  
Flame out i' the midst, the serpent writhe her rings,  
Grafted into the common stock for tail,  
And name the brute, Chimaera, which I slew!  
(XI, 11.1122-25, p.458)



Accordingly, Guido also pictures the Comparini as devils when he quotes what he believes Pompilia, as an obedient wife, should have said:

"Henceforward and forevermore, avaunt  
 "Ye fiends, who drop disguise and glare revealed  
 "In your own shape, no longer father mine  
 "Nor mother mine! (V, 11.787-90, p.172)

Pompilia is also pictured as a serpent as Guido notes that the

pure smooth egg which, laid within my nest,  
 Could not but hatch a comfort to us all,  
 Issues a cockatrice for me and mine. (V, 11.654-56, p.169)

Like the Comparini, Pompilia is associated with Satan, for Guido claims that he killed her to destroy "The antagonistic spark of hell and tread/ Satan and all his malice into dust" (V, 11.1576-77, p.191).

Ironically, the imagery which Guido employs to describe his rivals is most appropriate when applied to himself. Thus, like Bottinius, Guido errs by creating other characters in his own evil image. However, Guido is described by the other speakers of The Ring and the Book, and even by himself, in terms of animal imagery and through an association of the evil Count with Satan. Referring to the animal imagery in The Ring and the Book, T. H. Jones states,

This is indeed Browning's most striking imaginative effect in the whole poem: not only do all the other characters instinctively see Guido as something animal, but his essentially brutish nature is brought out and emphasized by the fact that he himself consistently thinks and speaks in animal terms, and so to a great extent does the lawyer who is defending him. 42



As with the jealous characters of the dramas and the dramatic monologues, Browning stresses the rapacity and viciousness of the victims of jealousy by consistently associating animal images, particularly those of wolves and serpents, with Guido. The animal imagery of The Ring and the Book, however, is much more intricately developed than that of the dramas and dramatic monologues, because not only Guido uses animal imagery to apply to others and to himself, but the other speakers also adopt similar image patterns to symbolize, consciously or unconsciously, the Count's jealous and evil nature. Like the jealous speakers portrayed in The Ring and the Book, The Other-Half Rome, Caponsacchi, Pompilia, and the Pope also recognize Guido's base, animal nature.

The Other Half-Rome, for example, expresses a sentimental and romantic interest in the Roman murder story, and because he feels pity for Pompilia, the beautiful and innocent heroine, he supports her for the wrong reasons. Nevertheless, he recognizes, to some extent, Guido's evil nature and thus pictures him in terms of animal imagery. For example, the speaker makes Pompilia describe Guido as " 'The beast below the beast in brutishness!' " (III, 1.1299, p.104) and accordingly pictures Guido as "worm-like" (III, 1.696, p.89), a lion (III, 1.534, p.85), a ferret (1.781, p.91), a "wolf-face whence the sheepskin fell" (1.991, p.96), a wildcat (1.324, p.104), and a dog "Whose bark had promised biting; but [who] just sneaked/ Back to his kennel, tail 'twixt legs" (11.1459-60, p.108).

Caponsacchi, like The Other Half-Rome, associates primarily Guido with animal images: "Comparatively few other animal references





exist in the monologue; the priest is not inclined to see his fellow men as beasts--precisely because he sees them as souls."<sup>43</sup> However, because Caponsacchi recognizes the truth of Pompilia's goodness and innocence, he vehemently expresses a much more passionate hatred for Guido than does any other speaker. His use of animal imagery thus appropriately characterizes the bestial, predatory, and evil nature of the Count. The priest, for example, names Guido "the beast" (VI, 1.1493, p.239), "the mad dog howling there" (1.1513, p.239), and the "transfixed scorpion" (1.671, p.219). Caponsacchi also employs snake imagery frequently, as when he refers to Guido as "the soft, sly adder" (1.620, p.217) and as "the snake, hatched on hill-top by mischance" (1.1924, p.249). He extends the metaphor to include the Franceschini family when he exclaims, "'No mother nor brother viper of the brood/ 'Shall scuttle off without the instructive bruise!'" (VI, 11.689-90, p.219). Caponsacchi also effectively combines the Count's serpent and wolf nature when he describes his encounter with Guido, who "part howled, part hissed" (VI, 1.1440, p.237), at the inn.

Caponsacchi frequently pictures himself as St. George rescuing Pompilia from Guido the dragon. Pompilia also speaks constantly of the priest as St. George or Perseus, her "soldier-saint" with "lustrous and pellucid soul" (VII, 1.935, p.276), and thus, by implication, Guido is the monster. Pompilia, however, does not consciously and directly apply animal images to her husband, for as Honan states, "She is not aware that she is imaging Guido even when she does it most vividly."<sup>44</sup> For example, even she unconsciously



applies the snake and wolf images to Guido by quoting "friends":

"Why, you Pompilia in the cavern thus,  
 "How comes that arm of yours about a wolf?  
 "And the soft length,--lies in and out your feet  
 "And laps you round the knee,--a snake it is!"  
 (VII, 11.124-27, p.257)

The Pope, who of all the speakers except Pompilia is most aware of the truth, also figures Caponsacchi as St. George. In addition, the Pope verifies Guido's bestial nature by developing an image pattern which pictures Guido, the voracious wolf, preying upon Pompilia, the innocent lamb. For example, describing the Comparini, he states that "they watched the wolf/ Feast on their heart, the lamb-like child his prey" (VIII, 11.557-58, p.394). Similarly, pretending that he is addressing the Archbishop, the Pope questions, "How of this lamb that panted at thy foot/ While the wolf pressed on her within crook's reach?" (VIII, 11.989-90, p.404). Like Caponsacchi, the Pope extends the images of vicious animals to apply to the entire Franceschini family, for Paolo is "this fox-faced horrible priest" (VIII, 1.879, p.402), Girolamo is "nor wolf nor fox,/ But hybrid" (VIII, 11.897-98, p.402), and their mother is "the hag that gave these three abortions birth" (VIII, 1.911, p.402). Because the Pope, unlike the jealous speakers of The Ring and the Book, does not speak from self-interest, he is able to perceive the entire truth of Pompilia's goodness and innocence and Guido's evil and guilt. The Pope's exacting perception of the truth is reflected in his use of animal imagery for, as Park Honan writes, "the Pope makes it clear which animal it is that most appropriately characterizes villain and heroine of the piece." <sup>45</sup>





Although Guido, in his first dramatic monologue, refers to his supposed rivals in terms of images which best describe himself, in Book XI he finally reaches self-realization and identifies himself with wolf and serpent images. In Book V, he ironically and unwittingly arrives at the truth of his own nature when he cynically remarks, "Before we had cohabited a month/ She found I was a devil and no man" (V, 11.612-13, p.168). Similarly, Guido inadvertently compares himself with Satan when he describes his pursuit of Pompilia and Caponsacchi, stating that he

Floundered thro' day and night, another day  
And yet another night, and so at last,  
As Lucifer kept falling to find hell,  
Tumbled into the court-yard of an inn.  
(V, 11.1044-47, p.178)

In Book XI, before he admits to his wolf and serpent nature, Guido again unconsciously reveals his real character as he uses the verb "writhe" (XI, 1.117, p.434) to describe his own movements. Finally, however, Guido realizes that the Cardinal and the Abate will not reverse his death sentence and, therefore, resigns to telling the truth: "There, let my sheepskin-garb, a curse on't, go--/ Leave my teeth free if I must show my shag!" (XI, 11.443-44, p.442). This image serves him as he denounces the Church which, he states,

bade me wear sheep's wool  
Over wolf's skin, suck blood and hide the noise  
By mimicry of something like a bleat--  
(XI, 11.824-26, p.451)

Similarly, he presents himself as "the veritable wolf beneath" the "sheep-like thing" (XI, 11.1176 & 1174, p.459) as he explains why the Comparini could not take advantage of him through the marriage contract. Guido finally identifies himself so completely with the



wolf image that he envisions the total loss of his humanity, which is to be replaced by a wholly bestial nature after death:

Let me turn wolf, be whole, and sate, for once,--  
 Wallow in what is now a wolfishness  
 Coerced too much by the humanity  
 That's half of me as well! Grow out of man,  
 Glut the wolf-nature,-- (XI, 11.2054-58, p.480)

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Through the use of animal imagery to picture Guido, Browning depicts the ultimate baseness, voracity, and evil to which a man, driven by jealousy, particularly by jealous rivalry, can succumb. Nevertheless, Guido is not merely evil personified, but remains a human being who, like Othello, is driven to madness by his jealousy. The creation of Guido thus reflects the poet's profound understanding of the complexity of this passion, an understanding which is also evident in the dramatic monologues. However, because the dramatic monologues as a whole cannot possess the unity of The Ring and the Book, the latter work treats the theme of jealousy with the greatest depth and intricacy. The many speakers, for example, employ very similar image patterns which reveal that all the characters recognize, either consciously or unconsciously, Guido's base, evil, and jealous nature. The use of animal imagery to characterize the jealous individual is evident even in the early dramas, is used more concentratedly and consistently in the later dramas and in the dramatic monologues, and is developed to its greatest effectiveness in The Ring and the Book. The Ring and the Book also reflects and develops Browning's early interest in the presence of this passion



in the upper intellectual and social classes, and thus the work stresses the poet's understanding, which is particularly emphasized in the dramatic monologues, that no man, regardless of his social or intellectual status, is immune to becoming jealousy's victim.

As in the dramatic monologues and to an even greater extent when one considers the character of Guido, Browning demonstrates his profound understanding of the complexity of the passion as he illustrates other passions associated with jealousy, characteristics common to jealous individuals, and similar reactions of jealous characters to their situations. First, like the dramatic monologues, The Ring and the Book presents love, which must be qualified as self-love, as the primary passion associated with jealousy. Half-Rome supplies little evidence that he loves his wife; however, like Tertium Quid, Archangeli, Bottinius, and Guido, he betrays his self-love through a dramatic monologue motivated by his self-centered interests. None of the jealous characters can perceive the truth of the murder case because each is blinded by self-interest. Only Guido grasps the truth of his own evil nature in Book XI when he realizes that his death sentence is irrevocable. Wrath and possessiveness, demonstrated particularly by Half-Rome and Guido, are also passions often associated with jealousy. Both Half-Rome and Guido are frustrated, angry individuals verbally and physically striking out against their situations. Both jealous characters seek possession of their wives; however, only Guido reveals his feelings of failure and inadequacy which motivate his possessiveness of Pompilia. Next to love, hatred for a rival is, perhaps, the most common passion





associated with jealousy. Half-Rome, Archangeli, Bottinius, and particularly Guido vehemently denounce and, to varying degrees, threaten their rivals. Only Guido, however, harbours a hatred so intense that he murders his imagined opponents.

Associated with self-love are the common characteristics of self-centeredness and egotism shared by all the jealous characters of The Ring and the Book. Pride also characterizes the jealous individual, for Half-Rome, Tertium Quid, Archangeli, Bottinius, and Guido each stresses a concern for regaining, maintaining, or augmenting his own honour. The feeling of inferiority or failure is a characteristic best exemplified by the jealous Guido, although the fear of failure or inadequacy seems to motivate the rivalry of the other jealous characters in The Ring and the Book. Finally, as demonstrated by some jealous individuals of the dramatic monologues, self-pity characterizes the jealous individual who perceives his own inadequacy or failure in life. As part of his strategy, Guido attempts in Book V to gain the sympathy of the judges; however, his self-pity is not feigned, because he believes that he has been unjustly maligned and defeated by his imagined rivals.

In addition to illustrating the common passions and characteristics of jealous individuals, Browning presents his intricate understanding of the passion of jealousy by suggesting that jealous individuals react similarly in similar situations. For example, Guido in Book V shows a thorough understanding of a jealous husband's reactions when he pretends that, before Pompilia and Caponsacchi met, he heard "a treason in [her] every innocent conversation," perceived



"a betrayal in a smile of politeness," and imagined "an already consummated embrace in the exchange of social graciousness." <sup>46</sup> Guido's claim to jealousy in love before Pompilia's escape is not well substantiated; however, after the birth of Gaetano, whom Guido refuses to recognize as his legitimate heir, the Count may, indeed, have been the jealous husband who imagines clandestine meetings between his wife and the priest. Similarly, a jealous individual commonly reacts with malice to the success and happiness of his rival. Again, Guido best serves as an example, because his malice develops into extreme and unjustified hatred which motivates his torture and eventual murder of the Comparini and of Pompilia. The lawyers are also malicious toward each other as they are rehearsing their respective speeches, and after losing his case, Archangeli vows to avenge his defeat with "Gomez and the marriage-case" (XII, 1.363, p.497) to "bruise his [Bottinius]' own [pate], belike, that wags and brags" (XII, 1.366, p.498).

Each jealous speaker reveals his own character through his interpretation of the Roman murder story; however, Browning's greatest achievement in his study of jealousy is his creation of Count Guido Franceschini. Because the dramatic monologues of The Ring and the Book are unified, the reader gains various interpretations of the Count's character, as well as Guido's own estimation of himself, first wearing the mask of nobility and finally, in his second dramatic monologue, revealing his real nature. Guido is the culmination of all of Browning's jealous characters, for he illustrates the depths into which a man, afflicted by jealousy,





can descend. Consequently, The Ring and the Book is the climax of Browning's presentation of the theme of jealousy.



## Conclusion

Robert Browning's abiding interest in the theme of jealousy, which is evident in the dramas, the dramatic monologues, and The Ring and the Book, marks his steady progression as a poet. The early experiments with stage drama illustrate his awareness of the complexity of jealousy, for Browning begins to present the different manifestations of jealousy, as well as the common passions, common characteristics, and similar reactions of jealous characters. These aspects of jealousy are not, however, developed in depth, for the jealous characters, such as the jealous courtiers of the early political plays, are shallow and static stereotypes rather than complex individuals. Since Browning's primary interest was character creation rather than adherence to dramatic convention, the dramatic monologue form proved most conducive to his purpose. With the development of this form, already incorporated into some of his early dramas, Robert Browning could increasingly concentrate upon character development to the complete omission of stage convention. As a result, the more fully developed characters of those dramas which tend toward the dramatic monologue form better exemplify the different manifestations of jealousy as well as the passions, characteristics, and reactions of jealous individuals than do the characters from the dramas which adhere to stage convention. Similarly, the jealous speakers of the dramatic monologues evidence



such depth and complexity that their jealous natures are superbly presented. Finally, through the unification of the twelve dramatic monologues in The Ring and the Book, the theme of jealousy evolves with the greatest complexity, particularly in the presentation of Count Guido Franceschini.

Browning's steady progression in the development of the theme of jealousy is paralleled by his use of animal imagery to characterize jealous individuals. The early dramas initiate the use of animal imagery to portray the voracity and baseness of jealous individuals, and the dramatic monologues further develop the imagery and indicate, as Park Honan notes, "more certain evidence of Browning's conscious artistry in imagery than ever before."<sup>1</sup> The animal-image patterns of The Ring and the Book are even more effective than those of the dramatic monologues could possibly be because, since "some of the same image subjects carry over from monologue to monologue, the imagery tends to operate in certain ways not paralleled in the independent monologues."<sup>2</sup> The ironic juxtaposition of the upper social and intellectual classes with animal imagery, initiated in the dramas, continued in the dramatic monologues, and concentrated upon in The Ring and the Book, effectively demonstrates that all men, regardless of their elevated positions, reveal their base and voracious natures when they are victims of jealousy. Because the dramatic monologues expose the passion of jealousy in all classes of both men and women, they confirm that no human being is immune to becoming the victim of jealousy.





Consequently, as he was writing his early dramas, Browning was aware of the complexity, universality, and baseness of jealousy. Only with his development of the dramatic monologue form, however, does Browning effectively convey his understanding of the passion of jealousy, and the unification of several dramatic monologues into a single poem renders his treatment of the theme of jealousy even more effective. The majority of Browning's jealous characters are afflicted by jealous rivalry, and thus one can conclude that Browning perceived this form of jealousy most prevalent and often initiatory to jealousy in love and jealous preservation of a possession. Thus, Robert Browning demonstrates throughout his works, from Strafford in 1837 to The Ring and the Book in 1868, that the different manifestations of jealousy can afflict all men and women to varying degrees; and he superbly illustrates, particularly through his creation of Guido, the depths of evil and insanity to which a jealous individual can descend.



## Footnotes

### Introduction

<sup>1</sup>Robert Burton, The Anatomy of Melancholy, eds. Floyd Dell and Paul Jordan-Smith (New York: Tudor Publishing Company, 1955), p.821.

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<sup>3</sup>Kalavros, p.147.

<sup>4</sup>Kalavros, p.154.

<sup>5</sup>Burton, p.843.

<sup>6</sup>Kalavros, p.149.

<sup>7</sup>Marguerite and Willard Beecher, The Mark of Cain: An Anatomy of Jealousy (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1971), p.11.

<sup>8</sup>Beecher, p.17.

<sup>9</sup>Beecher, p.11.

<sup>10</sup>Kalavros, p.160.

<sup>11</sup>Kalavros, p.148.

<sup>12</sup>Beecher, p.177.

<sup>13</sup>Kalavros, p.163.

<sup>14</sup>Quoted by Helmut Schoeck, Envy: A Theory of Social Behaviour, trans. Michael Glenny and Betty Ross (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1966), p.96.

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## Chapter I

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<sup>2</sup>James Patton McCormick, "Robert Browning and the Experimental Drama," Modern Language Association Publication, 68, 1953, p.982.

<sup>3</sup>Quoted by Scudder, p.74.

<sup>4</sup>Quoted by Scudder, p.49.

<sup>5</sup>McCormick, p.983.

<sup>6</sup>McCormick, p.983.

<sup>7</sup>Donald S. Hair, Browning's Experiments with Genre (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972), p.45.

<sup>8</sup>William Clyde DeVane, A Browning Handbook, 2nd ed. (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1955), p.137.

<sup>9</sup>Quoted by DeVane, p.137.

<sup>10</sup>Scudder, "Biographical Sketch" in The Poems of Browning, p.xiii.

<sup>11</sup>William Shakespeare, "Othello" in The Complete Works of Shakespeare, Hardin Craig, ed. (Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1961), III, iii, 11.166-167, p.963.

<sup>12</sup>Park Honan, Browning's Characters: A Study in Poetic Technique (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961), p.101.

<sup>13</sup>Honan, p.57.

<sup>14</sup>Honan, p.50.

<sup>15</sup>All quotations from Strafford, King Victor and King Charles, Colombe's Birthday, Luria, and A Soul's Tragedy are from The Poems of Robert Browning, edited by H. E. Scudder.

<sup>16</sup>Honan, p.92.

<sup>17</sup>Honan, p.93.

<sup>18</sup>Honan, p.50.

<sup>19</sup>McCormick, p.984.



<sup>20</sup>Honan, p.58.

<sup>21</sup>DeVane, p.150.

<sup>22</sup>Scudder, p.299.

<sup>23</sup>Honan, p.78.

<sup>24</sup>Honan, p.75.

<sup>25</sup>Hair, p.70.

<sup>26</sup>Honan, p.103.

<sup>27</sup>Honan, p.70.

<sup>28</sup>McCormick, p.985.

<sup>29</sup>Hair, p.61.

<sup>30</sup>Hair, p.58.

<sup>31</sup>Roma A. King, Jr., The Focusing Artifice: The Poetry of Robert Browning (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1968), p.43.

<sup>32</sup>Arthur E. DuBois, "Robert Browning, Dramatist," Studies in Philology, 33, 1936, p.643.

<sup>33</sup>DeVane, p.92.

<sup>34</sup>Honan, p.81.

<sup>35</sup>Honan, p.82.

<sup>36</sup>Margaret E. Glen, "The Meaning and Structure of Pippa Passes," University of Toronto Quarterly, 24, 1955, p.411.

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<sup>38</sup>All quotations from Pippa Passes and "In a Balcony" are from Browning: Poetical Works, 1833-1864, Ian Jack, ed., (London: Oxford University Press, 1970).

<sup>39</sup>Kramer, p.242.

<sup>40</sup>Kramer, p.242.

<sup>41</sup>Kramer, p.244.

<sup>42</sup>Kramer, p.244.



<sup>43</sup>Honan, p.86.

<sup>44</sup>J. M. Ariail, "Is 'Pippa Passes' a Dramatic Failure?"  
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<sup>45</sup>Honan, pp.84-85.

<sup>46</sup>Honan, p.42.

<sup>47</sup>C. H. Herford, Robert Browning (New York: Haskell House  
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<sup>48</sup>McCormick, p.990.

<sup>49</sup>King, p.59.

<sup>50</sup>King, p.59.

<sup>51</sup>King, p.58.

<sup>52</sup>C. W. Smith, Browning's Star-Imagery: The Study of a Detail  
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<sup>53</sup>DeVane, p.252.

<sup>54</sup>Elmer Edgar Stoll, "Browning's In a Balcony," Modern Language  
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<sup>55</sup>Smith, p.36.

<sup>56</sup>Stoll, p.409.





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<sup>1</sup>Roma A. King, Jr., The Focusing Artifice: The Poetry of Robert Browning (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1968), p.65.

<sup>2</sup>King, p.74.

<sup>3</sup>King, p.91.

<sup>4</sup>King, p.115.

<sup>5</sup>William Lyon Phelps, Robert Browning (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1932), p.169.

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<sup>8</sup>Honan, p.115.

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<sup>10</sup>King, p.65.

<sup>11</sup>Robert Langbaum, The Poetry of Experience: The Dramatic Monologue in Modern Literary Tradition (London: Chatto & Windus, 1957), p.77.

<sup>12</sup>Langbaum, p.106.

<sup>13</sup>Langbaum, p.78.

<sup>14</sup>Honan, p.122.

<sup>15</sup>Louis S. Friedland, "Ferrara and 'My Last Duchess'," Studies in Philology, 33, 1936, p.675.

<sup>16</sup>All quotations from Browning's dramatic poems are from Browning: Poetical Works 1833-1864, edited by Ian Jack (London: Oxford University Press, 1970).

<sup>17</sup>King, p.72.

<sup>18</sup>Laurence Perrine, "Browning's 'Too Late': A Re-Interpretation," Victorian Poetry, 7, 1969, p.342.

<sup>19</sup>Perrine, p.340.

<sup>20</sup>Perrine, p.340.



<sup>21</sup>Perrine, p.340.

<sup>22</sup>Donald S. Hair, Browning's Experiments with Genre (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972), p.79.

<sup>23</sup>Hair, p.111.

<sup>24</sup>King, p.116.

<sup>25</sup>Dallas Kenmare, An End to Darkness: A New Approach to Robert Browning and his Work (London: Peter Owen Limited, 1962), p.156.

<sup>26</sup>Kenmare, pp.156-157.

<sup>27</sup>Thomas Blackburn, Robert Browning: A Study of his Poetry (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1967), p.68.

<sup>28</sup>King, p.96.

<sup>29</sup>William Clyde DeVane, A Browning Handbook, 2nd ed. (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1955), p.122.

<sup>30</sup>Mrs. Sutherland Orr, A Handbook to the Works of Robert Browning (London: G. Bell and Sons, Ltd., 1910), p.225.

<sup>31</sup>Clyde S. Kilby, "Browning's 'Cristina'," The Explicator, II, No. 2, item 16.

<sup>32</sup>Blackburn, p.58.

<sup>33</sup>Blackburn, p.58.

<sup>34</sup>David Eggenschwiler, "Psychological Complexity in 'Porphyria's Lover'," Victorian Poetry, 8, 1970, p.44.

<sup>35</sup>King, p.107.

<sup>36</sup>Roma A. King, "Browning: 'Mage' and 'Maker'--A Study in Poetic Purpose and Method" in Robert Browning: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Philip Drew (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1966,) p.194.

<sup>37</sup>King, p.194.

<sup>38</sup>King, The Focusing Artifice, p.80.

<sup>39</sup>John Howard, "Caliban's Mind," in Robert Browning: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Philip Drew (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1966), pp.229-230.



<sup>40</sup>Howard, p.233.

<sup>41</sup>Philip M. Kalavros, Pose and Jealousy (New York: Philosophical Library, 1963), p.144.

<sup>42</sup>David Sanstroem, "Animal and Vegetable in the Spanish Cloister," Victorian Poetry, 6, 1968, p.71.

<sup>43</sup>Sanstroem, p.71.

<sup>44</sup>George Monteiro, "The Apostasy and Death of St. Praxed's Bishop," Victorian Poetry, 8, 1970, p.216.

<sup>45</sup>Charles T. Phipps, "The Bishop as Bishop: Clerical Motif and Meaning in 'The Bishop Orders his Tomb at Saint Praxed's Church'," Victorian Poetry, 8, 1970, p.206.

<sup>46</sup>Quoted by H. E. Scudder, The Poems of Browning (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1895), p.1021.

<sup>47</sup>King, The Focusing Artifice, p.77.

<sup>48</sup>Kalavros, p.164.

<sup>49</sup>Robert Burton, The Anatomy of Melancholy, Floyd Dell and Paul Jordan-Smith, eds. (New York: Tudor Publishing Company, 1955), p.821.

<sup>50</sup>Kalavros, p.147.

<sup>51</sup>Kalavros, p.160.

<sup>52</sup>Marguerite and Willard Beecher, The Mark of Cain: An Anatomy of Jealousy (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1971), p.12.

<sup>53</sup>Kalavros, p.148.

<sup>54</sup>Beecher, p.177.





### Chapter III

<sup>1</sup>Roma A. King, Jr., The Focusing Artifice: The Poetry of Robert Browning (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1968), p.166.

<sup>2</sup>King, p.166.

<sup>3</sup>Park Honan, Browning's Characters: A Study in Poetic Technique (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961) pp.167-168.

<sup>4</sup>Honan, p.180.

<sup>5</sup>Honan, p.180.

<sup>6</sup>Barton R. Friedman, "To Tell the Sun from the Druid Fire: Imagery of Good and Evil in The Ring and the Book," Studies in English Literature, 6, 1966, p.694.

<sup>7</sup>Friedman, p.704.

<sup>8</sup>C. Willard Smith, Browning's Star-Imagery: The Study of a Detail in Poetic Design (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1941), p.194-95.

<sup>9</sup>Gordon W. Thompson, "Authorial Detachment and Imagery in The Ring and the Book," Studies in English Literature, 10, 1970), p.681.

<sup>10</sup>William Clyde DeVane, "The Virgin and the Dragon" (1947) in Robert Browning: A Collection of Critical Essays, Philip Drew, ed., (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1966), p.105.

<sup>11</sup>DeVane, p.107.

<sup>12</sup>All quotations from The Ring and the Book are from Robert Browning's Poems and Plays: The Ring and the Book, 1868-9, vol. III (London: J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd., 1962).

<sup>13</sup>Donald S. Hair, Browning's Experiments with Genre (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972), p.131.

<sup>14</sup>Hair, p.132.

<sup>15</sup>Friedman, p.702.

<sup>16</sup>Honan, p.181.

<sup>17</sup>Honan, p.181.

<sup>18</sup>Honan, p.183.

<sup>19</sup>Honan, p.183.



<sup>20</sup>Hair, p.138.

<sup>21</sup>Hair, p.139.

<sup>22</sup>King, p.162.

<sup>23</sup>Philip Drew, "A Note on the Lawyers," Victorian Poetry, 6, 1968, p.297.

<sup>24</sup>Drew, p.297.

<sup>25</sup>Hair, p.157.

<sup>26</sup>Honan, p.184.

<sup>27</sup>Honan, p.184.

<sup>28</sup>Honan, p.184.

<sup>29</sup>King, p.162.

<sup>30</sup>Hair, p.161.

<sup>31</sup>Drew, p.303.

<sup>32</sup>Jerome L. Wyant, "The Legal Episodes in The Ring and the Book," Victorian Poetry, 6, 1968, p.319.

<sup>33</sup>W. David Shaw, The Dialectical Temper: The Rhetorical Art of Robert Browning (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1968), p.276.

<sup>34</sup>Shaw, p.258.

<sup>35</sup>Roy Gridley, "Browning's Two Guidos," University of Toronto Quarterly, 37, 1967, p.67.

<sup>36</sup>Gridley, p.51.

<sup>37</sup>King, p.144.

<sup>38</sup>King, p.144.

<sup>39</sup>King, p.142.

<sup>40</sup>King, p.142.

<sup>41</sup>King, p.143.

<sup>42</sup>T. H. Jones, "The Disposition of Images in Browning's 'The Ring and the Book'," Journal of the Australian Universities Language and Literature Association, No. 13, 1960, p.66.



<sup>43</sup>Honan, p.184.

<sup>44</sup>Honan, p.185.

<sup>45</sup>Honan, p.187.

<sup>46</sup>Philip M. Kalavros, Pose and Jealousy (New York: Philosophical Library, 1963), p.148.

#### Conclusion

<sup>1</sup>Park Honan, Browning's Characters: A Study in Poetic Technique (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961), p.168.

<sup>2</sup>Honan, p.180.





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